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MICHAEL PONZA and others	Age Differences in Support for Income Transfers
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JON A. KROSNICK and DUANE F. ALWIN	The Form-Resistant Correlation Hypothesis
JACOB HORNIK and SHMUEL ELLIS	Securing Compliance for a Mall Interview
THE POLLS	Review: 1985 USIA Central American Surveys *by Kenneth M. Coleman and Lee Sigelman* Report: Nuclear Anxiety *by Tom W. Smith*
CONTROVERSIES	On Frames of Reference *Eleanor Singer / Howard Schuman*
BOOKS	Reviews *by McKee J. McClendon, Manfred Kuechler, Charles Tilly, Richard W. Boyd, and S[illegible]ndra H. Berry*

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439

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VOLUME 52 / WINTER 1988 / NUMBER 4

Articles

The Guns of Autumn? Age Differences in Support for Income Transfers to the Young and Old 441
MICHAEL PONZA, GREG J. DUNCAN, MARY CORCORAN, and FRED GROSKIND

Mail Survey Response Rate: A Meta-Analysis of Selected Techniques for Inducing Response 467
RICHARD J. FOX, MELVIN R. CRASK, and JONGHOON KIM

Social Issues and Socioeconomic Status 492
JEROME L. HIMMELSTEIN and JAMES A. MCRAE, JR.

No Opinion or Not Sure? 513
OTIS DUDLEY DUNCAN and MAGNUS STENBECK

A Test of the Form-Resistant Correlation Hypothesis: Ratings, Rankings, and the Measurement of Values 526
JON A. KROSNICK and DUANE F. ALWIN

Strategies to Secure Compliance for a Mall Intercept Interview 539
JACOB HORNIK and SHMUEL ELLIS

The Polls

Review: The 1985 USIA Central American Surveys 552
KENNETH M. COLEMAN and LEE SIGELMAN

Report: Nuclear Anxiety 557
TOM W. SMITH

Controversies

On Frames of Reference 576
ELEANOR SINGER

Rejoinder 579
HOWARD SCHUMAN

440

Book Reviews

Hans-J. Hippler, Norbert Schwarz, and Seymour Sudman, eds., *Social Information Processing and Survey Methodology* 582
MCKEE J. MCCLENDON

Detlev J. K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* 584
MANFRED KUECHLER

Olivier Blanc, *Last Letters: Prisons and Prisoners of the French Revolution, 1793–1794* 587
CHARLES TILLY

Ruy A. Teixeira, *Why Americans Don't Vote: Turnout Decline in the United States, 1960–1984* 589
RICHARD W. BOYD

Brian Keenan and Marilyn Mauch, *Developing and Using Questionnaires* 591
SANDRA H. BERRY

INDEX TO VOLUME 52, 1988 593

441

THE GUNS OF AUTUMN? AGE DIFFERENCES IN SUPPORT FOR INCOME TRANSFERS TO THE YOUNG AND OLD

MICHAEL PONZA
GREG J. DUNCAN
MARY CORCORAN AND
FRED GROSKIND

Abstract Data from the 1973 and 1986 General Social Surveys are used to test the hypothesis that elderly individuals favor public spending patterns that support their own interests and not those of children. Support for educational spending and welfare by the elderly is found to be less than within other age groups. Age patterns of support for Social Security spending are mixed. Responses to a series of "vignettes" depicting low-income families with young children and elderly women living alone showed that elderly respondents are slightly more supportive than average of transfers to low-income families with children and less supportive than average of transfers to low-income members of their own cohort. Elderly respondents appear more generous once their more frugal notions of what it takes to "get along" are taken into account. Support for transfers to young families is more closely related to income than age and is not consistent with the hypothesis that the elderly support programs that benefit themselves at the expense of programs that benefit the young.

In his 1984 presidential address to the Population Association of America, Samuel Preston observed that the rapid decline in the propor-

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tion of children and the simultaneous increase in the proportion of aged in the population have been accompanied by surprising changes in the age structure of economic well-being. He asserts that "demographers would probably expect such a rapid change to have favorable consequences for children and troubling ones for the elderly" (Preston, 1984:435). But using a variety of indicators of well-being, Preston in fact demonstrates that just the reverse has occurred: the well-being of the elderly has improved relative to that of children. Preston argues that a crucial factor producing these trends is that the size of government transfer programs varies positively with cohort size for those life-cycle stages when the cohorts are out of the labor force.

Key to this argument are the assumptions that people support spending policies that are in their self-interest and that people in different age groups have different self-interests. Preston identifies three sources of self-interested support for the elderly: the elderly themselves, the working-age population voting to support the elderly because otherwise they would be directly responsible for their parents' or grandparents' well-being, and the working-age population voting to support transfers to the elderly as insurance for their own old age. More popular discussions of the issue that has become known as "intergenerational equity" have focused exclusively on the increasing political power of the elderly. One commentator characterized the key issue as the validity of the "reconstruction of our stereotypic views of the elderly—from a poor, impotent, and deserving population subgroup to a wealthy and powerful voting bloc for whom costly government programs flourish at the expense of needy children and financially strapped workers" (Minkler, 1987:48).

At the core of the discussion are a set of hypotheses about age-related support for governmental policies. The elderly and the older middle-aged can be expected to support public programs for the elderly (e.g., health care, Social Security, and Supplemental Security Income) because they either are or will become elderly in the near future, while they would be less likely to support public programs for children because they probably have no young children of their own. Similarly, younger adults might be expected to be more supportive than older individuals of programs for children because they are more likely to have children and their own old age is still in the distant future. Both of these tendencies, however, would be dampened by three-generation linkages, as when the elderly have grandchildren and when the young have living grandparents.

In this paper, we analyze data from the nationally representative 1973 and 1986 General Social Surveys (GSS) to see if support for public programs varies by age in ways consistent with these arguments. The GSS provides several different ways of assessing public opinion about public transfer programs. We begin by examining age differences in respondents' answers to questions about whether they thought too much or too little was being spent on education, welfare, and Social Security. Responses to these spending questions show that although the elderly are more supportive of increased educational spending now than a decade ago, at both times such support was less than within other age groups. The elderly were also less supportive of welfare expenditures than other age groups, while age patterns of support for Social Security spending were mixed.

An alternative and more specific method for analyzing support for means-tested transfers are responses to a series of "vignettes" collected as part of the 1986 GSS that depict the demographic and financial circumstances of young low-income families and low-income elderly individuals. We use them to explore age and income differences both in the willingness to grant transfers and in the dollar amounts people would grant to families with children and to the elderly. The vignette-based evidence does not support the premise that the elderly, taken as a whole, prefer less generous than average transfers to families with children and more generous than average transfers to the elderly. What we do find is support for a model in which individuals view such transfers as a form of insurance against income losses. High-income elderly and near elderly, for whom the tax cost of such transfers is highest and the likely benefits the least, are least supportive of such transfers. But this lower support should be viewed more as a function of income than age, since low-income elderly are more supportive of transfers to low-income families with children than are the members of almost any other age group except the very young.

Responses to Spending Questions

Public opinion research on support for different kinds of government programs has typically relied on questions that ask whether we are spending "too much," "too little," or "about the right amount" on various programs.[1]

Differential support among young and old respondents for programs most likely to benefit children and the elderly has been used as evidence in the debate over whether the elderly tend to favor programs that benefit members of their own ranks. Although we have reservations about their usefulness, we begin with some evidence on responses to these kinds of questions before turning to different and, we suspect, more valid attitudinal data.

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[1] See Shapiro et al., 1987, for a recent review of responses to questions of this kind regarding income transfers.

As part of the 1986 General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, some 1,400 nationally representative respondents were asked the following question:

> We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of the problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. First, space exploration [. . . education, Social Security, welfare]: are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on (*item*)?

Identical questions had sometimes been asked of different cross-sections of respondents in prior years; we also present data from the 1973 GSS which contained responses to identical questions on spending for "education" and "welfare."[2]

Responses to questions about spending on education and Social Security by age of the respondent are presented in Table 1. Consistent with the notion that the elderly are less likely than the average person to support programs for the young, Table 1 shows that substantially fewer older than younger respondents favored increased spending on education and somewhat more favored decreases in such spending. Half of the elderly respondents in 1986 felt too little and 11% thought too much was being spent on education (middle panel of Table 1), compared with 74% and 2%, respectively, for young respondents. Perhaps surprisingly, the elderly were more likely in 1986 than in 1973 to respond that too little was being spent on education (50% in 1986 compared with 37% in 1973); however, this increased concern is shared by members of every age group. Also surprising is that elderly respondents were the *least* supportive of increased spending on Social Security. However, a closer look at the entire Social Security table shows that the elderly were also least likely to want less Social Security spending; a majority of the elderly were content with current levels of support for the program. Unfortunately, identical questions on Social Security were not asked in the GSS prior to the 1984 survey.

If the term "welfare" is associated with transfer programs to young working-age members of the population (e.g., Aid to Families with Dependent Children, food stamps), then age patterns for attitudes toward welfare are similar to those toward education: only 14% of the elderly thought too little was being spent on welfare in 1986 compared

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[2] There was a question wording experiment on "education" versus "improving the nation's education system" which produced few differences but does limit our analysis of the 1986 "education" wording to a random half-sample of respondents.

Table 1. Attitudes About Spending on Education and Social Security by Age of Respondent

	1973 Education					1986 Education					1986 Social Security				
Age of Respondent	Too Little	About Right	Too Much	Don't Know	Cases	Too Little	About Right	Too Much	Don't Know	Cases	Too Little	About Right	Too Much	Don't Know	Cases
Less than 35	55%	37	6	3	519	74%	23	2	0	253	63%	27	7	3	496
35–54	51%	37	8	4	533	70%	26	4	1	235	58%	33	7	2	463
55–64	42%	39	15	4	231	60%	27	8	5	84	52%	38	6	3	164
65 and older	37%	40	13	10	217	50%	37	11	3	123	42%	54	3	2	264
All ages	49%	38	9	4	1500	67%	27	5	1	695	56%	35	6	2	1387
Chi-square	52.4					43.0					60.2				
p value	<.01					<.01					<.01				
df	9					9					9				

SOURCE: 1973 and 1986 General Social Surveys.

to 22% for all households (Table 2). The elderly were less supportive of welfare expenditures in 1986 than in 1973: 20% of the elderly thought too little was spent on welfare in 1973 compared with 14% in 1986.

Questions of this type about aggregate expenditures on broad categories such as "welfare" or "education" have often been criticized as being too general and simplistic to yield meaningful inferences regarding preferences toward government-provided goods and services (Fisher, 1985).[3] More importantly, these questions offer no information about public preferences at the program or recipient level and thus offer little guidence on likely voting behavior for candidates or proposals linked to specific program changes. Rather than attempting to tease out the "true" opinions of the elderly and nonelderly on redistributive programs using these problematic questions dealing with aggregate expenditures, we turn in the next section to results based on what we believe is a better method of assessing such opinions.

Vignette Analysis

GSS WELFARE ENTITLEMENT VIGNETTE DATA

At the suggestion of Rossi (1983), a set of welfare entitlement vignettes were developed for inclusion in the 1986 General Social Survey.[4] Respondents to the GSS were asked questions on what welfare benefits, if any, should be awarded to a set of ten vignette families. Seven of the vignettes depicted young families with children and three depicted elderly women living alone. The young family vignettes contained ten dimensions: number/age of child(ren), marital status of parents, labor force status/situation of father, mother's education, mother's employment status, marital status of father if not currently married to the children's mother, financial prospects, financial help from the mother's parents, savings, and current family income. The elderly woman vignettes included five dimensions: age of woman, situation of children, housing tenure, savings, and current income. These dimensions were varied randomly across vignettes.[5] After reading and viewing on a line

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[3] In addition, responses have been shown to be extremely sensitive to question wording, e.g., whether the term "welfare" or "assistance to the poor" is used (see Smith, 1987). It appears that "welfare" is taken to mean the current set of problematic welfare programs while "assistance to the poor" is taken to refer to a less specific and more idealized way of providing help to low-income households.

[4] See Smith, 1986, for a more complete history of the development of the question sequence.

[5] The dimensions for the young family vignettes were all designed to be orthogonal to one another with three exceptions: (1) mothers worked full- or part-time only if family income was greater than $50, (2) fathers were employed full-time (none were employed part-time) only if family income was greater than $50, and (3) if the parents were married to each other, no separate marital status for the father is given.

Table 2. Attitudes About Spending on Welfare by Age of Respondent

	1973 Welfare					1986 Welfare				
Age of Respondent	Too Little	About Right	Too Much	Don't Know	Cases	Too Little	About Right	Too Much	Don't Know	Cases
Less than 35	23%	25	50	2	519	27%	35	37	1	246
35–54	18%	22	56	4	533	21%	34	42	3	228
55–64	14%	26	53	6	231	28%	31	38	4	80
65 and older	20%	28	42	8	217	14%	34	48	5	141
All ages	20%	24	51	4	1500	22%	34	40	4	695
Chi-square	19.2					16.8				
p value	<.05					<.05				
df	9					9				

Source: 1973 and 1986 General Social Surveys.

graph the pretransfer weekly income of each vignette family (hereafter termed "vignette-designated income"), respondents were asked to mark on the same graph "what should this family's income be," including "both the money already available from sources other than the government and any public assistance support you think this family should get." We interpret the difference between the respondent's designated total income, including public support, and the pretransfer income designated in the vignette as the respondent's desired public transfer to the vignette family or individual. Respondents were reminded at the beginning of the vignette booklet that conferring benefits to vignette families could affect the respondent's taxes. The introductory statement to the vignette booklet, two sample vignettes, and a response scale common to both sets of vignettes are given in the Appendix.

The vignette approach has several advantages over other methods of assessing attitudes of this type (Rossi and Nock, 1982; Smith, 1986). Random selection of the characteristics of vignette families assures that these dimensions are orthogonal, producing several statistical advantages (e.g., no multicolinearity among vignette characteristics). The "stimulus" of the vignette to respondents is more controllable and uniform, thus, one would hope, producing a more realistic assessment of respondents' likely support for benefit levels in actual transfer programs. Although variants of the vignette approach have been used in past research on issues related to income distribution (Shepelak and Alwin, 1986) and welfare entitlement (Cook, 1979; Woods, 1984; Alves and Rossi, 1978), no study had used it to collect a quantitative measure of transfer payments from a national sample of respondents.

The 1,405 respondents to the vignette supplements produced 13,609 codable responses to the 14,050 possible vignettes, although the various sample restrictions we impose (in particular limiting much of our analysis to vignettes depicting families with the lowest pretransfer incomes) produce a much smaller case count for our analyses. An analysis of case and item nonresponse by Smith (1986) revealed no obvious indications of bias. While the majority of responses consisted of positive benefits awarded to the vignette family or individual, zero benefits were awarded roughly 40% of the time and negative benefits (i.e., respondents marked an income level that was lower than the pretransfer income specified in the vignette) were awarded in about 7% of the cases. Based on an analysis detailed in Smith, 1986, and Duncan and Groskind, 1987, in which negative awards were found to occur much more frequently for vignette families with higher incomes, we interpret the negative awards as a desire on the part of respondents to tax away a portion of the vignette family's income rather than provide a positive transfer to it.[6] Our analysis is restricted to vignette families with very low ($50 per week) pretransfer incomes, for whom rates of positive awards are much higher, often exceeding 80%.

SELF-INTEREST, INSURANCE, AND ALTRUISTIC MOTIVES

The vignette data reflect respondent attitudes regarding income transfers to the low-income elderly and to one- and two-parent families with children. Such transfers admittedly constitute a rather limited subset of public expenditures directed toward the elderly and children. Spending on low-income transfer programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Supplemental Security Income, and food stamps pales when compared with spending on Social Security and education. However, such simple dollar comparisons ignore the disproportionate importance accorded the least well-off members of the ranks of the elderly and children in the current debate over generational equity. Much of that debate focuses on the incidence of poverty among the young and old and on trends in means-tested transfer programs aimed at alleviating that poverty. The vignettes focus directly on situations involving transfers to poor elderly people and children, and thus would appear to be a more valid way of assessing support for means-tested programs than the vague aggregate spending questions reviewed in the previous section.

An additional advantage of focusing on demand for income redistribution to low-income elderly and families with children is that theories of demand for income transfers to low-income individuals can be specified and made to yield concrete predictions to a greater extent than can theories of demand for more general types of public expenditures. Toward that end, it is useful to distinguish three models that have been developed to explain individual demand for income redistribution: self-interest coalition, income insurance, and altruism. We begin with a discussion of these theories and use it to guide our subsequent interpretation of the vignette data.[7]

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[6] About one-third of the negative awards resulted when respondents designated an income of zero, i.e., the respondent wanted to take away all of the vignette family's pretransfer income. An analysis of these cases by Duncan and Groskind (1987) showed that a substantial number of them appeared to result when respondents misunderstood the task. There was no evidence that they were related to strong negative attitudes toward welfare programs. Our analysis excludes respondents who designated zero incomes on any of the vignettes, although their exclusion has virtually no effect on our results.

[7] This discussion draws on work by Ponza (1988), which formulates and analyzes insurance models of individual demands for income redistribution and tests them using the 1986 GSS entitlement vignette data.

The self-interest coalition model that appears to be at the core of the debate over "intergenerational equity" is based on the notion that individuals form coalitions with the purpose of getting the government to undertake programs that redistribute income to them and "disperse cost either generally or to voters not in the coalition" (Rodgers, 1974:166). Characteristics like age, income, race, and even region (e.g., tobacco states) can provide the common basis for organizing to force the government to act for one's benefit and at others' expense. The pattern of income redistribution that emerges depends on the underlying preferences of coalition members, their organizational strengths, and how successful their representatives are in influencing the legislative process.

In the context of attitudes about transfers directed at poor families and elderly women, an elderly coalition may arise if the preferences toward such transfers among the elderly as a whole differ from the rest of the population. There may well be a dispersion of such preferences within the ranks of the elderly, but even substantial dispersion can be tolerated within a coalition as long as the attitudes of its median member differ substantially from those of nonmembers. Since the personal benefits of spending on transfers to low-income families with children generally decrease with age, the cleanest test of the self-interest coalition hypothesis is whether the elderly are less supportive of transfers to young families than are other individuals.

A second and closely related model of demand for income redistribution is based on individuals' desires to insure themselves against income losses (Buchanan and Tullock, 1962; Arrow, 1963; Rodgers, 1974; Varian, 1980). Evidence from data sets such as the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) shows that individual and family incomes change frequently over time as a result of unemployment, divorce, and other events (Duncan et al., 1984; Duncan, forthcoming). Virtually no one appears to be completely immune to the possibility of experiencing a large reduction in income. Accordingly, nonpoor individuals might be willing to support income redistribution programs if they felt they or their relatives might need them at some point during their life.

As in the self-interest coalition model, individuals with insurance motives desire income-support programs in order to enhance their *own* (family) income in a world of uncertain economic fortunes; but, in contrast to that model, there is not necessarily the desire to disperse cost to others directly or indirectly. If actuarially fair insurance against income losses were available in private insurance markets, then risk-averse individuals would be expected to insure income losses fully at those fair rates (Varian, 1978). However, the problem that insured individuals might be tempted to change their behavior to collect more benefits (moral hazard) and that only individuals most prone to income losses might purchase such insurance (adverse selection) make such private insurance impossible. Instead, income-tested government transfer programs can be seen as providing insurance against income losses, and individuals pay taxes as insurance "premiums."

Insurance motives can be expected to produce preferences toward income transfer programs that differ according to family income level and its variability.[8] For any level of mean income and variance, greater downside income risk[9] increases the likelihood of a need for income transfers and thus would be expected to increase support for spending on transfer programs. But with income variability and downside risk constant, the self-interest of those at the top of the income distribution is not as well-served by publicly provided income insurance as it is for those at the bottom or middle. For high-income individuals, income insurance provided by public assistance is not attractive because the likelihood that their income will fall below the minimum income that triggers welfare payments is low and the likelihood that they will pay a disproportionate share of the income transfer (insurance) costs is high. In view of the fact that individuals with higher incomes have alternative methods for providing income insurance (e.g., savings, annuities) it seems reasonable to expect that an insurance-motivated individual with a high income would be less supportive of means-tested income transfers and demand less generous transfers than would an individual with a lower income.

Within the insurance framework, respondents' age itself is not a key causal variable but may correlate with their risk of low income and the likelihood that they have relatives who might benefit from income transfers directed to low-income families. Thus, it is expected that young respondents will be more supportive and generous than average to young low-income families with children since they may view such transfers as insurance for themselves. If they have grandchildren, elderly individuals might also be generous to the young families because they can view these programs as providing insurance for their grandchildren in the event of income loss due to disability, unemployment, or divorce.[10] The young, particularly young women, might be expected to be generous to elderly women since, given future income uncertainty, they can view such transfers as providing insurance against income loss when they themselves get old. Opinions among the elderly toward transfers to their own age group are expected to be more sharply split along the dimension of income since they have less uncertainty about future income. They are less likely to be working and more likely to be receiving either Social Security or pension income and drawing upon savings. Thus, self-insurance motives should lead only the low-income elderly to be more supportive and generous to the elderly vignettes.

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[8] Two other causal factors are the tax price of income transfers and individual attitudes toward risk. Everything else equal, an increase in the tax price will lower an individual's demand for income transfers; greater aversion to income risk will increase the demand for income insurance.

[9] Downside risk is concerned with the "location" of risk in an individual's income distribution. One distribution has greater downside risk than another if it has more dispersion (or is skewed) to the left. A pure increase in income risk (variability) involves transferring weight from the center of the distribution to the tails without changing the mean. An increase in downside risk, however, involves both a spread and contraction of the distribution such that probability weight is transferred from the right to the left side of the distribution without changing the mean or variance of the distribution (see Menezes, Geiss, and Tressler, 1980, for more discussion). We make this distinction because a pure increase in risk does not unambiguously mean that more transfers will be demanded. It depends on the position of one's expected income relative to the eligibility income level of the income transfer program. For risk-averse individuals with the bulk of their income distributions above the eligibility level, an increase in risk should lead to greater demand for income transfers; for those with income distributions positioned below the eligibility income level, greater income variability is welcomed since, with income bounded from below at zero, greater variability means a greater likelihood of income realizations above the eligibility level and a lessened need for transfers.

Quite distinct from the self-interest and insurance motives for support of income redistribution are models based on an "altruistic" rationale for support for the poor. In a series of articles beginning with Hochman and Rodgers, 1969, and more recently in work by Warr (1982), it was demonstrated that if middle- and high-income individuals care about the economic well-being of low-income individuals, then income transfers can sometimes benefit all groups.[11] Transfers in this case take on the character of a public good, and, as is usual with public goods, individuals acting alone produce a suboptimal level of income transfers. Public provision of income transfers to low-income individuals can lead to an improvement in society's economic welfare.

The most thorough work in this framework is Orr's (1976) analysis of AFDC benefits. Holding one's tax share and preferences toward income redistribution constant, his model predicts that higher incomes increase the demand for income transfers—as people become wealthier, they place less value on increments to their own income and are more inclined towards redistribution. This implication is in direct contrast to that of the insurance model. Furthermore, altruistic individuals would not be expected in general to differ by their age in their awards toward the different types of low-income recipients other than according to the needs of the families as evidenced by family size, unless the size and age composition of the recipient families provides some sort of signal as to the "deservingness" of the particular family or if their characteristics are similar to those of the respondents.

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[10] See, for example, Loury, 1980, and Johnson, 1987, which formulate models which explain parents' support for publicly provided income transfers as insurance to reduce income uncertainty due to risky human capital investments in their children.

[11] See Warr, 1982, for references to this earlier work.

Thus, the three models provide varying expectations about the relationship between age, income, and support for spending programs for low-income families with children and for the elderly. If the elderly coalition model is correct, we should find that both low-income and high-income elderly are less generous than average in their awards to the young vignette families and more generous than average in their awards to the elderly woman vignettes. If the insurance motive is operative, controlling for "tax price," all high-income respondents, regardless of age, should be less supportive of income transfers than their low-income counterparts. Within the elderly group, the high-income elderly would be expected to be less generous than low-income elderly in their awards to the elderly women depicted in the vignettes. To the extent that the insurance or self-interest coalition motive is not relevant as a determinant of individual demand for income transfers and the altruism motive is, then the income effect should be just the opposite, controlling for tax price, with higher income individuals within all age groups more inclined to grant positive transfers and to be more generous in their dollar amounts awarded.

Unfortunately, the GSS data do not contain information on whether elderly respondents have grandchildren or whether young respondents have living grandparents, nor do they include direct measurements of tax price or income variability. But we can use the Panel Study of Income Dynamics data to estimate a "tax price" faced by each GSS respondent. Thus, in addition to age, our analysis focuses on the income of GSS respondents as a proxy measure of their expected level of income and their altruistic motives, controlling for the "tax price" faced by the respondent.

AVERAGE BENEFIT LEVELS AWARDED TO YOUNG FAMILIES AND ELDERLY WOMEN

Benefits awarded by the GSS respondents to vignettes with the lowest designated level of pretransfer income—$50 per week—depicting mother-only and two-parent families and elderly individuals provide measures of transfer benefits supported by the median respondent. A large majority of respondents would provide at least some benefits for all of the family structure types included in the vignettes, with the extent of support generally increasing with family size. Weekly benefit levels were relatively generous, equalling $154, on average, for mother-only families with two children, $185 for two-parent families with two children, and $142 for an elderly woman living alone. These amounts exceeded the benefit levels of existing cash and near-cash means-tested transfer programs (e.g., AFDC and food stamps for the young, SSI and food stamps for the elderly women), and imply post-transfer total annual incomes that exceeded the official U.S. poverty thresholds for all but the largest families.[12]

The relative generosity of benefits awarded to low-income elderly women is striking. Their $142 weekly benefit was 77% as high as the average benefit awarded to two-parent families with two children. U.S. poverty thresholds assume that the needs of elderly women living alone are only 49% those of two-parent, two-children families. One possible reason for the relative generosity toward elderly woman vignettes is that the distribution of vignette dimensions might produce more deserving elderly vignettes relative to the likely actual elderly recipients than young family vignettes relative to likely actual young family recipients. However, this seems unlikely because, as shown in Duncan and Ponza, 1987, assets of the elderly women dominated their perceived deservingness. One-third of the vignettes depicted elderly women who were home owners with no mortgages and half had at least $10,000 in savings. In contrast, the majority (three-fifths) of the mother-only vignettes depicted mothers who were looking for work or constrained by health or children from working, and all had savings of $1,000 or less.[13]

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12. There are two reasons to question the validity of the absolute benefit levels implied by the GSS responses. First, although respondents were reminded at the beginning of the vignettes that granting benefits would affect taxes, it is unclear how well that message was understood. Second, the responses to what each vignette family's income "should be" might include not only governmental transfers but also notions of fairness or justice in the income distribution that are not intended to have programmatic consequences. For example, it is possible that the respondent is marking amounts that assume that social welfare policies have somehow accomplished their intended objectives without negative side effects like reducing labor supply, increasing out-of-wedlock births, or encouraging divorce. These and other potential biases with the GSS vignettes were examined by Ponza (1988) and appear minimal. For example, benefits increase with family size but at a declining rate such that for families with more children the implied yearly posttransfer income is less than the poverty thresholds for these families. This pattern seems more consistent with the fear expressed by respondents in the GSS and other surveys that granting nearly equal benefits for each additional child would simply encourage more births by single low-income women. In other analyses, Ponza found that respondents who felt strongly that welfare adversely affected work incentives preferred lower income guarantees (i.e., amount of benefits entitled to with no other sources of income) and benefit reduction rates (i.e., the rate at which benefits are reduced per dollar of nonwelfare sources of income) than otherwise similar respondents who did not hold that attitude.

13. Ponza (1988) compared the distribution of vignette characteristics with distributions obtained from PSID and from published distributions for AFDC and SSI recipients obtained from actual caseload data files. He concludes that along most dimensions the average GSS vignette families are quite similar to actual poor families or means-tested transfer recipients. For a few characteristics there is considerable disparity; however, the comparison indicates that GSS vignette families are, if anything, less deserving than actual poor families or recipients.

AGE DIFFERENCES IN BENEFITS AWARDED

An elderly coalition view of public support for entitlements to the poor leads to expectations that elderly and near-elderly respondents should be relatively less generous than younger respondents to poor families with children and relatively more generous than younger respondents to poor elderly women. We explore this theory by calculating the fraction of vignettes awarded a positive benefit and the average weekly benefit awarded by respondents of different ages. Separate calculations are made for mother-only family vignettes with $50/week pretransfer income and for all elderly women vignettes with $50/week pretransfer income. The odd-numbered columns of Table 3 present these results separately for four age groups: less than 35 years old (young); 35–54 years old (middle-aged); 55–64 years old (older middle-aged), and 65 and older (elderly). Since individuals aged 55–64 years will become elderly soon, they ought to view policies that help the aged as promoting their interests much more than policies that aid children.

We find one consistent age effect. Respondents under 35 years of age are more generous to both young families and elderly women than are respondents in any other age group. Rates of positive awards and average weekly benefits do *not* indicate that the elderly penalize the young poor when awarding benefits. Elderly and older middle-aged respondents are about as likely as middle-aged respondents to award benefits to mother-only families with children (86% and 74% vs. 80%), and the average benefits awarded by the two older groups were no smaller than average benefits awarded by middle-aged respondents ($160 and $153 vs. $144). Similarly, there was no indication that respondents over 54 years favored the elderly woman vignettes more than did respondents under 54 years. The proportion of respondents assigning positive benefits to elderly women with $50/week incomes ranged from .78 to .83 across the three over-34 age groups. Nor is there any evidence that older respondents favored the elderly woman vignettes when setting benefit levels. Indeed, respondents over 54 years assigned significantly *lower* benefits to elderly women than did younger respondents ($122/week by 55–64 year olds and $128/week by 65 and older vs. $145/week by 35–44 year olds).

The fact that older respondents appear less generous than younger respondents when awarding benefits to low-income elderly women seems counterintuitive. But this finding is consistent with the research of Clemente (1975), Klemmack (1983), and Klemmack and Roff (1980, 1981), all of whom report that the aged place a lower priority on benefits for the aged than do other groups.

One possibility is that elderly and older middle-aged respondents have lower (and perhaps more realistic) appraisals of how much in-

Table 3. Fraction Awarding a Positive Benefit, Average Benefit, and Perceived Adequacy of Benefits Awarded to $50 per Week Pretransfer Income Mother-Only and Elderly Women Vignettes, by Age of Respondent

	Fraction Awarding a Positive Transfer				Average Weekly Benefits				Ratio of Posttransfer Weekly Income to "Smallest Amount Needed for a Family of Four to Get Along in this Community"				Number of Observations	
	Mother-Only		Elderly Woman		Mother-Only		Elderly Woman		Mother-Only		Elderly Woman			
Age and Income of Respondent	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	Mother-Only	Elderly Woman
Less than 35	.88		.90		$171		$152		.75		.67		287	341
Less than $20,000		.90		.90		179		147		.81		.71	152	161
More than $20,000		.85		.90		164		154		.67		.62	123	157

35–54	.80		.83		144		145		.64		.62		252		279	
Less than $20,000		.75		.86		142		163		.76		.76		69		76
More than $20,000		.81		.82		139		141		.58		.58		169		189
55–64	.74		.78		153		122		.68		.61		97		101	
Less than $20,000		.84		.78		153		122		.79		.64		43		47
More than $20,000		.66		.77		117		125		.61		.60		47		48
65 and older	.86		.81		160		128		.76		.65		145		172	
Less than $20,000		.91		.82		170		122		.84		.69		90		109
More than $20,000		.74		.74		133		120		.57		.54		39		38
All ages	.83		.85		$158		$142		.70		.64		781	732	893	825
Chi-square	13	24	12	15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—				
Eta^2 (adj.)	—	—	—	—	.006	.022	.008	.009	.006	.029	.000	.013				
p value	<.01	<.01	<.01	<.05	<.05	<.01	<.05	<.05	<.10	<.01	n.s.	<.05				

SOURCE: 1986 General Social Survey.
NOTE: Case counts across income classes don't sum to case counts across age classes due to missing data on income.

come is necessary for an adequate standard of living. That is, perhaps older respondents are just as willing as other respondents to subsidize poor individuals until they reach some minimum income level, but notions of the appropriate minimum vary by age. This proposition can be tested, since the GSS asked respondents an income adequacy question: "What is the smallest amount needed for a family of four to get along in this community?" For each vignette response, we constructed the ratio of the posttransfer income implied by the response ($50 plus the respondent-designated weekly benefit level) to the response to the income adequacy question. This ratio is a rough measure of proportionately how far a respondent is willing to go in providing transfers to vignette households relative to the respondent's subjective assessment of an adequate income standard for a family of four. Results using this ratio, shown in the right half of Table 3, indicate that age differences in average weekly benefits awarded to poor elderly vignette women disappear once age differences in responses to the income adequacy question are taken into account. Even with these adjustments, however, there is no evidence for an elderly coalition model based on the premise that the elderly are significantly less generous to young families and more generous to themselves than are other groups.

INCOME DIFFERENCES IN BENEFITS AWARDED

Insurance and altruism models of demand for public spending both stress the importance of the income of the respondent. We explored income patterns by calculating each of our vignette benefits measures for eight age-income categories, formed by interacting our four age categories with two income categories, split at $20,000. The results are shown in the even-numbered columns of Table 3. The power (eta-squared) of the age-income categories in accounting for variation in benefits awarded to mother-only families is more than three times as large as the power of age alone. Income differences in support for mother-only families appear within virtually all age categories, with higher income respondents *less* generous than lower income respondents. Income differences in support for the elderly are less pronounced. These patterns generally support the insurance model and do not support the altruism model.

One age-income effect is consistent with Preston's thesis. Respondents with more than $20,000 in income and age 55 and older were less likely to award positive transfers to mother-only families than were younger respondents with similar incomes, although only the 55–64 high-income group is significantly different from the rest. Respondents aged 55–64 with more than $20,000 in income also awarded significantly lower weekly benefits than younger high-income respondents ($117 vs. $139 and $164). However, when we look at lower income respondents (less than $20,000), respondents over 54 years were just as likely to award mother-only families positive benefits and awarded just as large benefits as did respondents under 55 years.

As an extension of the bivariate analysis of the determinants of attitudes regarding income transfers reported in Table 3, we ran a series of Tobit multiple regressions on the weekly benefits awarded to mother-only and elderly vignettes.[14] The regressors included age, education, "tax price,"[15] "expected" income,[16] and several of the vignette family dimensions.[17]

The first and fifth columns of Table 4 show that the tobit treatment of the benefit awards does little to alter the bivariate association with age found in Table 3. Elderly respondents are second only to the youngest group of respondents (who constitute the omitted dummy variable in the set) in their generosity to the mother-only vignettes and, along with the 55–64 year olds, are the least generous to the elderly woman vignettes.

The addition of the natural logarithm of expected family income to the list of regressors (columns 2 and 6) produces a negative coefficient on income in both cases, but only for the mother-only vignettes is the

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[14] Roughly 20% of the respondents awarded zero public assistance to the vignette families depicted in the GSS. Thus, the dependent variable, dollar net benefits, is a "limited dependent variable," i.e., it is censored from below at zero. Estimating the regression with ordinary least squares would yield biased and inconsistent parameter estimates (Amemiya, 1984). The Tobit (censored) regression model is the appropriate statistical method in this case, yielding consistent parameter estimates.

[15] The tax price was estimated using the 1984 wave of the PSID. The dependent variable was the head and wife's federal tax liability in dollars, and it was regressed against family income, family income squared, whether home owner, and number of exemptions (based on number and age of family members). This equation is used to predict the federal marginal tax liability faced by GSS respondents based on GSS respondent characteristics. The results of the regression are in a technical appendix available from the authors on request.

[16] Expected income level was estimated with data from the 1975–84 waves of the PSID, based on current income level, occupation, industry, experience, race, education, gender, and marital status of household heads. Comparable information from the GSS was used to estimate likely expected future income of GSS respondents. These results are contained in a technical appendix available from the authors on request.

[17] For the young vignettes the family characteristics are: whether two children, whether four children, whether $1,000 in savings, whether father unemployed and not looking for work, whether father in prison, whether father disabled, whether mother unemployed not looking for work, whether mother unemployed not looking because can't find affordable child care, whether mother unemployed not looking because lacks transportation, and whether mother unemployed not looking because available jobs only pay minimum wages. For the elderly vignettes, the characteristics are: whether owns home and mortgage payment, whether owns home and no mortgage payment, whether have grown-up children financially well-off, whether grown children not financially well-off, and savings levels—whether $1,000, whether $5,000, whether $10,000, whether $25,000, and whether $50,000 in savings. See Duncan and Ponza, 1987, and Ponza, 1988, for a discussion of the effects of vignette characteristics on dollar benefits awarded by respondents.

Table 4. Tobit Regression Analysis of Dollar Weekly Benefits Awarded to $50 per Week Pretransfer Income Mother-Only and Elderly Women Vignettes

	Mother-Only				Elderly Women			
Independent Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Constant	$197	$400	$390	$318	$209	$255	$248	$231
	(19)	(79)	(79)	(86)	(18)	(62)	(62)	(69)
Less than 35	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
35–54	−35	−29	−29	−24	−9	−8	−8	−3
	(12)	(12)	(12)	(9)	(9)	(10)	(10)	(8)
55–64	−27	−28	−25	−18	−35	−35	−38	−28
	(16)	(16)	(16)	(13)	(10)	(14)	(15)	(12)
65 and over	−10	−22	−23	−23	−40	−42	−44	−35
	(15)	(16)	(16)	(13)	(12)	(13)	(13)	(10)
Income	—	−21	−19	−10	—	−5	−2	−2
		(8)	(8)	(9)		(6)	(6)	(8)
Education	—	—	−1.5	−1.5	—	—	−1.3	−1.2
			(2)	(2)			(1.4)	(1.2)
Tax price	—	—	—	−0.005	—	—	—	−0.002
				(.002)				(.002)
Sigma	133	132	132	131	114	113	113	112
	(4)	(4)	(4)	(4)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)
Log likelihood	−3965	−3960	−3959	−3958	−4413	−4413	−4412	−4412
Number of observations	732	732	732	732	825	825	825	825

Source: 1986 General Social Surveys.

Note: Standard errors are given in parentheses. "—" denotes variable omitted from regression. Regressions also include vignette family characteristics. See footnote 17 for description of these vignette characteristics.

coefficient large enough to attain statistical significance at conventional levels.[18] Adjustments for income differences also decrease the generosity of elderly respondents toward young woman vignettes, indicating that the elderly as a whole are so generous in part because of their lower economic position. Note, however, that this adjustment has little bearing on the self-interest coalition hypothesis, because voting behavior is presumably a function of the *un*adjusted preferences of elderly and nonelderly voters. Further adjustment for respondent differences in completed schooling do little to alter the pattern of either age or income effects.

The fourth and eighth columns of Table 4 show the results of an attempt to distinguish between the "price" of an income transfer, as measured by the respondent's federal tax liability, and the price-adjusted income effect. The latter is hypothesized to be negative in the insurance model and positive in the altruism model. Coefficients on both tax price and income are negative, but in only one instance are any of the coefficients significantly different from zero. For young mother-only vignettes the tax price was negative and significant at the 5% level. The high correlation between the tax price and income measures (an indication of which is the near doubling of the size of the standard error on the log income measure when the tax price is added to the regression) proved to be an insurmountable problem. Experimentation with numerous alternative measures of income and tax price and their functional forms failed to produce a set of estimates that we considered to be reliable.

The regressions bolster our confidence in two conclusions. First, higher-income respondents do indeed appear to be less generous to the mother-only vignettes, although we are unable to determine how much of the effect is due to their higher tax prices and how much to reduced demand for income insurance. Second, adjustments for income and education do nothing to explain the lower generosity of near-elderly and elderly respondents toward the elderly woman vignettes. However, such adjustments do show that the elderly would be almost as niggardly as middle-aged and near-elderly respondents were it not for their lower incomes.

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[18] The reported standard errors should be treated with some caution. The regressions are based on all $50 vignettes. In some instances, a respondent contributes more than one vignette to the analysis (but not more than two vignettes), producing vignette responses that are not completely independent of one another. Thus, the sample size appearing in the formulas to estimate standard errors is larger than it should be, producing estimated standard errors that are smaller. Also, because some respondents are answering multiple vignettes, the regression error term might be autoregressive. This will not affect parameter estimates since the Tobit specification retains the consistency property if the error term is autoregressive. Indeed, we reran the regression analyses limiting the sample to one vignette per respondent and the results did not change.

Summary and Implications

We have used data from the 1973 and 1986 General Social Surveys to test the hypothesis that elderly individuals favor public spending patterns that support their own interests. We begin with a very brief summary of our findings, followed by a discussion of the implications of the results in the context of the current debate over intergenerational equity.

Responses to very general questions about whether we are spending too much or too little on various government programs provide some support for the hypothesis that the elderly respond in ways that promote their own interests. The elderly are the only age group without majority support for additional spending on education and are the least likely to say that too much is being spent on Social Security. On the other hand, elderly respondents also appeared more supportive of education spending in 1986 than 1973 and the elderly were least likely to say that too little was being spent on Social Security. Responses to similar questions about support for increased spending on welfare programs for low-income families showed that the elderly were more likely than other age groups to view current spending levels as too high and least likely to view current spending levels as too low.

Much more promising for measuring latent demand for redistributive programs are responses to a series of vignettes depicting low-income families with young children and elderly women living alone. In general, respondents were much more generous in awarding transfers to poor elderly women than to young families with children. A more detailed analysis of vignette responses showed that elderly respondents were, if anything, slightly *more* supportive than average of transfers to low-income families with children and *less* supportive than average of transfers to low-income members of their own cohort. Much of the latter difference could be attributed to the more frugal notions the elderly have about how much income it takes to "get along." But taken as a whole, the results provide no support whatsoever for the "cohort" view in the self-interest hypothesis that predicts that the elderly favor redistributive transfers away from low-income families with children and toward low-income members of their own age group.

The income insurance hypothesis leads to expectations to differential support for income transfers depending on the tax cost to the respondent and the likelihood that he or his relatives will benefit from those programs. Consistent with this narrow interpretation, we found that higher income respondents of all ages were generally less likely to support such transfers. The differential support between high- and low-income elderly respondents for transfers directed at families with children was moderately large but only at the margin of statistical significance. The differential support between high- and low-income respondents in their preretirement years was large and significant.

Within income groups, however, we still found little evidence that older respondents penalized young vignette families. An exception were respondents between the ages of 55 and 64 with more than $20,000 in income, who were the least likely of any high-income age group to support transfers to low-income families with children. These respondents bear the greatest cost of such transfers and are among the least likely to benefit from them. But elderly high-income respondents were not significantly less supportive of transfers to young families than were high-income respondents aged 35 to 54 years. And the low-income elderly are, if anything, more supportive of young families with children than are members of other age-income groups.

Where then does this leave the hypothesis? There is abundant evidence from a number of other sources that living standards for the aged have risen during a period when children's living standards have declined. In part, these changes have been caused by more generous transfer benefits to the elderly and less generous benefits to low-income families with children. Growing political activism on the part of interest groups representing the elderly is undeniable. But the GSS data suggest that these lobbying efforts for programs that benefit the elderly are successful because they are consistent with the willingness of individuals in *all* age groups to support the elderly. The "coalition" favoring generous transfers to the elderly, at least when it comes to awarding benefits to poor elderly households, would appear to consist of a minority of the most supportive elderly combined with the implicit support of the majority of the nonelderly. Given its composition, such a coalition should not to be thought of as consisting of the elderly acting in their own self-interest. With regard to the relatively less generous transfers to low-income younger families, the importance of income rather than age of the respondent suggests a different kind of self-interest, based instead on the tax cost of the transfers and the desire for self-insurance against income loss.

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Appendix: Sample Vignettes

INTRODUCTION TO VIGNETTE BOOKLET

In this booklet we describe various kinds of families with incomes near or below the poverty line and ask your opinion about how much public assistance each family described should be given.

Remember that changes in the overall amounts spent on public assistance programs could lead to changes in the taxes we pay.

Mark on each page how much *total income per week* you think each family should receive.

TYPICAL VIGNETTE OF AN ELDERLY WOMAN

A 77 year old woman lives alone and is in good health. She has a married daughter who is financially well off. She rents her housing. She has $10,000 in savings. Her total income from Social Security, interest earned on her savings, and a private pension amounts to $100 per week.

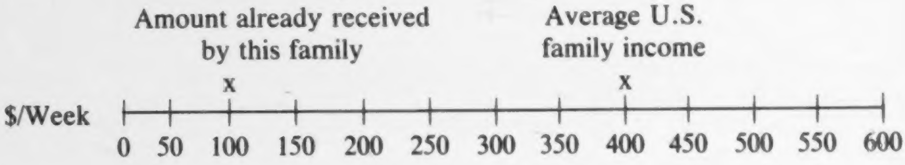
What should this woman's weekly income be? Include both the money already available and any public assistance you think this woman should get.

TYPICAL YOUNG FAMILY VIGNETTE

This family has four children, the youngest is six months old, living with their mother. The mother is divorced. The mother has a college degree and is unemployed and not looking for work because she has no ready means of transportation. The father has remarried and is permanently disabled. This family is likely to face financial difficulties for a couple of years. Her parents cannot help out financially. The family has $1000 in savings. All in all, the family's total income from sources other than the government is $100 per week.

What should this family's weekly income be? Include both the money already available from sources other than government and any public assistance support you think this family should get.

RESPONSE SCALE


Amount already received by this family
Average U.S. family income
x
x
$/Week
0
50
100
150
200
250
300
350
400
450
500
550
600

SOCIAL ISSUES AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

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Abstract This paper examines the hypothesized inverse relationship between socioeconomic status and conservatism on a wide range of so-called social issues. This relationship is important in itself as well as in some theories that link political dealignment to features of postindustrial society. We examine this relationship by looking at the net effects of education, occupation, income, and class (owner, supervisor, or worker) on nine issues. Our results suggest that the hypothesized relationship is absent for most dimensions of socioeconomic status and most social issues. The most consistent exception to this is that liberalism on social issues tends to increase with education, but even here the relationship varies considerably from issue to issue. The lack of a consistent relationship reflects both the diversity of the social issues and the fuzziness of the social/economic distinction.

The emergence in the United States in the last two decades of an inverse relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and conservatism on a broad range of "social" or "lifestyle" issues has become a commonplace of sociological observation and social criticism. This putative pattern is important in itself and takes on special significance in the effort to explain changes in the socioeconomic bases of support for the major political parties in the United States. Historically, the main source of support for left and liberal parties in the United States and other industrial capitalist societies has been the lower social strata

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(Lipset, 1968, 1980; Alford, 1963; Hamilton, 1972). In the last two decades, however, socioeconomic differences in voting have generally attenuated (Ladd and Hadley, 1975; Inglehart, 1977; Public Opinion, 1981a). Furthermore, the radical movements of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, France, and West Germany often attracted primary support not from working strata but from youthful members of upper or middle strata. Conversely, the political reaction to these movements apparently struck resonant chords in lower strata. At an extreme, the socioeconomic bases of conservatism and liberalism, of right and left, seemed to be reversed; one observer called the situation "Karl Marx upside down" (Harris, 1973:52). More cautious observers noted that although the classic relationship between SES and politics persisted, it was generally getting weaker.

POSTINDUSTRIAL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Theories of postindustrial society have provided one way of explaining this change (Phillips,1975; Ladd and Hadley, 1975; Ladd, 1978, 1979; Inglehart, 1977). The term "postindustrial society," to follow Inglehart's version of the argument, summarizes a set of interrelated changes that have occurred in the United States and other western industrial societies in recent years. At the heart of these changes have been technological innovation and the increasing economic productivity this affords. These in turn have led to (1) economic growth, a broad increase in real income, and a diffusion of affluence; (2) the growth of employment in the tertiary or service sector, especially in the knowledge industry and the professions; (3) the expansion of education; and (4) the growth of communications media.

The affluence and relative peace of the postwar Western world have created relatively high levels of economic and physical security and hence less preoccupation with these things, at least among some strata. The expansion of the knowledge industry, the professions, and the service sector have yielded a growing number of jobs that emphasize creativity and innovation rather than mere efficiency. The extension of education and the expansion of the mass media expose wide strata of the population to the values of the knowledge industry and the professions.

These changes have led to the growth of what Inglehart calls postmaterialist values, which emphasize "individual self-expression" and a "more participant, less hierarchical society," and the decline of materialist values, which emphasize order and material well-being (Inglehart, 1977:179). The spread of postmaterialist values, which is especially pronounced among the affluent, the better educated, and professionals, has helped to shift the "principle axis of political cleavage . . . from economic issues to life-style issues" (Inglehart, 1977:285), ones that have less to do with material interests and the allocation of material goods and more to do with values and status. Put another way, class politics began to give way to status politics. On these life-style issues, the political roles of the social strata tend to be reversed: the higher strata, more imbued with postmaterialist values, tend to support "social change" (conceptualized in social or life-style terms) and hence to shift allegiance to liberal political parties, and the lower strata tend to defend the status quo and hence to shift allegiance to conservative political parties.

In short, according to this theory, the growth of postmaterialist values and the emergence of life-style issues in the last two decades are at least partly responsible for transforming the relationship between SES and politics. In one form or another, several commentators have made this argument, though the terms "social issues" or "the social issue" have been more common than "life-style issues" (Asher, 1976; Erikson, Luttberg, and Tedin, 1980; Harris, 1973; Ladd, 1978, 1979; Ladd and Hadley, 1975; Phillips, 1975; Scammon and Wattenberg, 1971; Schneider, 1981). A wide range of contemporary issues have been said to fit this category. Blake (1971), Harris (1973), Kristol (1979), Ladd (1978, 1979), Ladd and Hadley (1975), Lichter and Rothman (1981), Lipset (1979), Nisbet (1979), Public Opinion (1981a, 1981b), Phillips (1975, 1982), Rothman (1979), and Skerry (1978) report inverse relationships between conservatism and socioeconomic status (which may mean income, education, and/or occupation—theories and research are often ambiguous and mix various dimensions of social location) on one or more of the following issues: moral issues like abortion, pornography, homosexuality, premarital sex, marijuana legalization, and divorce; racial issues like busing, affirmative action, and government aid to minorities; gender issues like the ERA and nontraditional roles for women; value issues like the relative emphasis on self-fulfillment, hard work, and success; growth issues like environmental protection and nuclear power; and national security issues like defense spending and foreign policy.

We critically assess the claim that socioeconomic status is inversely related to conservatism on a variety of life-style or social issues. Since the theory of postindustrial politics suggests that several dimensions of status and class each have independent effects on political attitudes, we examine the net effects of education, occupation, income, and class, which we conceptualize as relation to the means of production. We argue that many of the social issues do not in fact pit liberal upper strata against conservative lower strata and hence that the development of postmaterialist values and the emergence of social issues have not had the political effects often imputed to them.

HETEROGENEITY OF SOCIAL ISSUES

More broadly, we argue that it is misleading to assume that social and economic issues are homogeneous categories that can always be neatly distinguished from each other, and that the various dimensions of SES bear *any* invariant relations to these categories of issues. In the abstract, both the principle that the conservatism/liberalism distinction is bidimensional (at least) and the distinction between class politics and status politics (or between economic and life-style politics) are unexceptionable. Certainly, both antedate speculation on postindustrial politics (Stouffer, 1955; Hero, 1969; Lipset and Raab, 1970; Bell, 1963; Gusfield, 1963). In practice, however, many issues defy the neat dichotomies of interest versus values and of the economic versus the social that are thereby established. Many social issues, such as environmental protection, nuclear power, defense spending, and race and gender issues, have an economic dimension to the extent that they influence opportunities for jobs and profits. Conversely, governmental domestic spending, a classic economic issue, may have a social dimension if it is construed to involve "welfare" or aid to minorities. An exploratory factor analysis of attitudes concerning economic policies by Knoke, Raffalovich, and Erskine (1987) reveals that three dimensions, one of which they label "racial-welfare," are required to account for the intercorrelations of the nine items that they examine.

OTHER RESEARCH

Some of the work on the relationships of SES with social issues is open to methodological criticism. Some researchers (e.g., Erikson, Luttberg, and Tedin, 1980; Phillips, 1975; Nisbet, 1979) fail to specify what dimensions of SES are crucial and to distinguish adequately between them, while others (e.g., Ladd, 1978, 1979; Ladd and Hadley, 1975; Harris, 1973) analyze only bivariate relationships between SES and political attitudes.

Davis (1982) and Knoke (1979) provide more thorough investigations of these relationships. Davis includes respondent's education and occupation in his model, as well as father's occupation. He finds that education has a liberalizing influence on some social issues, but not on economic ones, while respondent's occupation has no impact whatsoever. Davis, given a purpose different from ours, does not include measures of income or class and does not control for age, race, or sex.

Knoke constructs a model in which the issues are latent variables representing social, racial, and economic dimensions of conservatism. The independent variables in Knoke's analysis are education, income, occupation, race, and age. Education has a liberalizing influence on both social and racial issues, income is positively related to conservatism on economic issues, and occupation (Duncan SEI) is negatively related to social conservatism. Being older leads to conservatism on social and racial issues but liberalism on economic ones, and being white leads to greater conservatism on racial and economic issues.

Knoke, citing Hodge and Siegel (1968) and Hodge (1970), presents a strong case for not aggregating the SES variables into a single dimension. The results of Knoke's analysis support this view. Too many theorists speak of the effects of class or strata generally, meaning some aggregation of socioeconomic measures, but socioeconomic status is not unidimensional. The effects of position on one dimension are different from those on other dimensions.

We propose that aggregation of the issue items can also be problematic. Piazza (1980) argues that the measured variables which are used to construct a latent variable should not only have relatively high interitem correlations but should also relate to the other variables of interest in similar ways. The strategy taken in much analysis employing latent variables involves only the first of these criteria. Indeed, a glance at the zero order relations of SES variables and several issues, which on a priori grounds might be used as indicators of latent concepts, reveals that the relationships are different. Combining these items in a scale enables researchers to learn about the "average" effect of, say, income on a number of different issues, but this average could well mask effects on individual issues that vary in both sign and magnitude. Unless the rather strict requirements of a model like Rasch can be satisfied such that the items can be shown to measure the same latent trait across strata (Duncan, 1984), it seems prudent to abstain from creating indices until the relations with other variables of interest have been examined.

One final problem is that the interpretation of the relationship between socioeconomic status and political attitudes might be spurious. It is possible that individuals are socialized by their parents into holding certain attitudes in their youths, and much research demonstrates that an individual's socioeconomic status depends on that of his parents (Blau and Duncan, 1967; Featherman and Hauser, 1978). Thus, the observed relationship between opinions and SES could simply result from parental characteristics. Ideally, then, we would like to have measures of parental socioeconomic status and political opinions. Including these in a model will provide us with greater assurance that the effects of SES are not spurious.

Data and Methods

We use the 1980 National Election Study conducted by the Center for Political Studies at the Institute for Social Research and the 1980 General Social Survey to investigate these matters because each contains a wide array of questions about issues which are currently being debated in the American political arena and enough questions to locate the respondents in the social system. The NES sample constitutes the second wave (C3PO) of a panel begun shortly before the 1980 elections. Of respondents sampled in the preelection survey, 1,614 completed the schedules. Of these, 1,408 or 87% of the preelection respondents completed the postelection schedule. The problem of panel attrition cannot be avoided because the attitudes most pertinent to our study were ascertained only in the postelection survey. The GSS sample included 1,468 respondents.

PARENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

For the NES, we use two types of parental variables, which could be roughly categorized as structural and attitudinal. The structural variables are mother's and father's occupation when the respondent was growing up. The codings of these and other independent variables are listed in Table 1. For mothers, the category *homemaker* is assigned for mothers of respondents who stated that their mothers did not work. We do less well in measuring the attitudes of respondents' parents. The problems of recall and attribution in asking respondents about their parents' attitudes when they were younger are obvious. As a proxy, we employ parents' political preferences. For the GSS, the structural variables are father's occupation, mother's and father's education, and whether the father was self-employed.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

The socioeconomic variables are education, income, occupation, and class, with similar categories in both surveys. We add the last of these because we suspect that one's relation to the means of production might have an impact distinct from the other variables. Presumably, different classes will have varying degrees of material security and adherence to postmaterialist values. Like Knoke, we eschew combining these variables into an index; instead we examine the net effects of each.

We treat educational attainment as a series of significant stages through which one passes (often marked by the conferring of credentials), rather than as years of schooling. Linear and squared terms are examined for both education and family income. Since so many re-

Table 1. List of Independent Variables

Variable	Categories
Age	Coded in single years
Born again	Yes, no
Class	Owner, supervisor, worker, missing
Father's class	Owner, other
Education	0–7, 8, 9–11, 12, 13–15, 16, 17+
Family income (NES)	Less than 2,000, 2,000–2,999, . . . , 14,000–14,999, 15,000–16,999, 17,000–18,999, . . . , 23,000–24,999, 25,000–29,999, 30,000–34,999, 35,000–49,999, 50,000+, missing
Family income (GSS)	Less than 1,000, 1,000–2,999, 3,000–3,999, . . . , 7,000–7,999, 8,000–9,999, 10,000–14,999, 15,000–19,999, 20,000–24,999, 25,000+, missing
Occupation	Professional, managerial, sales, clerical, crafts, operatives, labor, farmer,[a] farm labor,[a] service, homemaker, missing
Political party	Republican, independent, Democratic, missing
Color	Black, white
Religion	Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, none
Sex	Male, female

[a] *Farmer* and *farm labor* are not distinguished in the GSS.

spondents are unwilling or unable to report income, we include a dummy variable for missing in all models which include effects of income but do not report these effects as they have no obvious substantive interpretation. We examine dummy variables for occupation and express effects as deviations from those categories not in the model. Our measure of class is admittedly a weak one but does tap respondent's relation to the means of production. Workers include those who work for others and do not supervise anyone on the job; supervisors include those who work for others, but do supervise someone on the job; and owners include those who are at least partly self-employed. The surveys did not allow us to distinghish owners who employed others from those who did not, but we assume that most respondents in this category are petite bourgeoisie rather than big capital. In those cases where class of the respondent is missing but class of the head of household is known, the latter is assigned. Most of those so affected are homemakers. The missing category is relatively homogeneous. These respondents tend to be poor women without occupations. In the following analysis, class is treated linearly with a dummy for missing and as a series of dummies.

OTHER STRUCTURAL VARIABLES

We also include age, race, sex, and religion in our analysis. Although we are not directly concerned with their effects on political attitudes, they are likely to be correlated with both SES and the attitudes. Identifying the net effects of SES on attitudes thus requires controlling for these other variables. In the NES, but not the GSS, respondents are also categorized according to whether or not they have had a "born again" experience in order to distinguish evangelicals.

ATTITUDES

The NES and GSS measure attitudes on a range of issues. We selected those social issues that have been politically significant in recent years and that involve fairly clear, specific policy choices. They include abortion, ERA, nuclear power, environmental regulation, defense spending, and several issues concerning minority rights (government aid to minorities, busing, and speed of civil rights progress) in the NES and abortion, environmental regulation, minority rights, defense spending, pornography, and legalization of marijuana in the GSS. For comparison, we also analyze the classic economic issue of government domestic spending on both surveys. The exact wording of these questions is given in the appendix. Although the domestic spending questions do not specify that federal spending is the issue, preceding questions do so. We assume respondents gave their opinions about federal spending.

Using the data of the NES, we examined the bivariate relations of the attitudinal items to our structural variables and the intercorrelations of the attitudinal items listed above, as well as several others, to determine the feasibility of constructing scales; only for the minority questions does a scale seem appropriate. The relations of other attitudes to the structural factors are too variable to allow the construction of indexes.

Of the minority questions in the NES, two offered seven responses and one offered three responses. In order to obtain comparability, responses to the latter question were assigned the values 1, 4, and 7. We then calculated the mean response where two or more items were nonmissing. All dependent variables were then standardized to a mean of 0 and variance of 1.0 with a high score indicating conservatism. In order to replicate as closely as possible the analysis of the NES, we constructed a scale for abortion attitudes from the GSS question that asks if a woman should be able to have a legal abortion under six specific circumstances as well as if "she wants it for any reason." We omitted those few respondents who were intrinsically unscalable.

Forward stepwise regressions were estimated on the parental and ascribed characteristics in order to obtain a parsimonious way of controlling for these factors in estimating unbiased effects of the achieved characteristics.[1] Controlling for those effects which were significant ($p < .05$) or marginally significant ($.05 < p < .10$) in the stepwise analysis, we then estimated models which included effects of the achieved characteristics until we found models which could not be significantly improved by including additional achieved characteristics and could not be simplified by deleting these effects without a significant decrease in explained variance.

Results

Tables 2 and 3 present the unstandardized significant net effects of socioeconomic status on the various issues from the preferred models for the NES and GSS, respectively.[2] We also note several marginally significant effects.

EDUCATION

The results for education are especially intriguing. In particular, the importance of including squared terms is seen by the number of instances in which the square of education is significant. Merely fitting the linear term would lead one to report a simple conservative influence on several issues. In fact, the effects of education are considerably more complex that that. In the NES, education has a liberalizing effect on abortion and no significant effect on ERA. On the other issues, the effect is nonlinear, as shown in Figure 1. The numbers on the ordinate of Figure 1 are the predicted values of the dependent variable when all other factors in the model are set to zero. Setting the other factors in the models at other values would shift the curves up or down the ordinate, but the slopes of the curves would not change.

Regarding attitude toward minorities, increased education has a conservative effect up to eight years of schooling, but a liberalizing effect after that when the slope becomes negative. Since relatively few re-

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[1] We use the terms "ascribed" and "achieved" merely to denote temporal priority. Ascribed characteristics include age, race, and gender; achieved characteristics include education, income, class, and occupation, as well as religion. The term "achieved" does not imply that characteristic is earned. Achieved characteristics clearly depend on ascribed and parental ones (Blau and Duncan, 1967).

[2] These effects were estimated in models that also include the effects of religious preference. The effects of religion are briefly discussed in a later section of this paper.

Table 2. Significant Net Effects of Socioeconomic Status on Seven Issues in the NES

	Minorities		Nuclear Power		Environment		ERA		Abortion		Defense Spending		Domestic Spending	
Variable	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.
Education	.179	.079	.353	.092	.255	.099			−.119	.022	.228	.091	.265	.093
Education^2	−.045	.011	−.043	.012	−.038	.013					−.038	.013	−.032	.012
Class														
Supervise			.143	.060			−.111	.060[a]						
Own													.195	.079
Missing			.261	.132										
Income			.019	.005					−.016	.005			.018	.006
Occupation														
Professional							−.222	.078			−.209	.087		
Managerial					.213	.090							.247	.087
Sales													.299	.127
Clerical									−.144	.074[a]			.155	.078
Skilled			−.265	.090										
Operative					−.198	.096								
Labor											−.578	.163		
Farmer					.582	.226								
Religion														
Protestant	.150	.050	.253	.080	.273	.084	.153	.067	.606	.077	.264	.077		
Catholic			.189	.090	.157	.095[a]			.771	.087	.149	.090[a]		
Jewish							−.568	.166					−.454	.149
None							−.210	.114[a]						

[a] $.05 < p < .10$.

Table 3. Significant Net Effects of Socioeconomic Status on Seven Issues in the GSS

	Minorities		Marijuana		Environment		Pornography		Abortion		Defense Spending		Domestic Spending	
Variable	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.
Education	.032	.078	−.085	.021			−.070	.020	−.096	.023	.089	.089	.053	.022
Education^2	−.019	.011^a									−.025	.012		
Class														
Work					−.099	.054^a	−.093	.056^a						
Supervise			.116	.059										
Own							−.296	.085						
Missing											.304	.156^a	.314	.150
Income	.028	.010									.161	.048	−.049	.049
Income^2											−.008	.003	.006	.003
Occupation														
Professional	−.234	.082												
Managerial	−.197	.082							−.282	.088				
Sales	−.230	.105												
Operative					−.116	.078^b			.151	.007				
Labor														
Farmer	.277	.169^a	.311	.180	.274	.186^b								
Service							−.189	.074						
Religion														
Protestant	.334	.051	.104	.056^a							.320	.056	.196	.061
Catholic					−.130	.061			.299	.061				
Jewish					−.466	.186	−.370	.170	−.481	.183				
None			−.636	.105			−.544	.095	−.608	.103			.245	.112

[a] $.05 < p < .10$.
[b] $.05 < p < .10$ for $df = 2$.

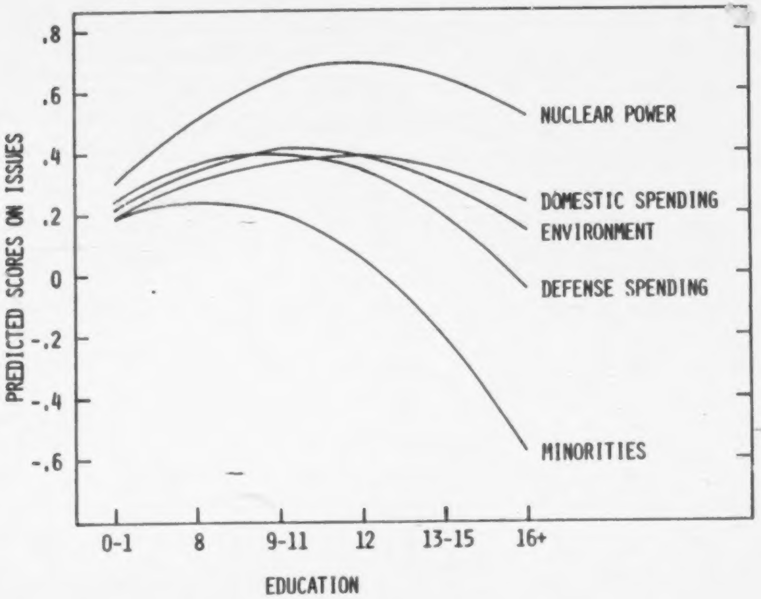

Figure 1. Effects of Education on Five Issues. Scores are predicted with all variables other than education set to 0.

spondents have less than an elementary school education, we are not very confident about the conservative effect at the low levels. We are considerably more confident about the accelerating liberal effect at higher levels, which corresponds nicely with Knoke's finding of a negative effect of education on the racial factor in his model.

For the four remaining issues, the pattern is slightly different. Conservatism increases with additional schooling for those with up to 9–11 or 12 years of education. After that, education has a liberal effect of varying magnitude—most pronounced for defense spending and least pronounced for nuclear power. The general principle seems to be that the early years of education, as seen in those whose education stops at these early levels, tends to inculcate allegiance to the status quo, while further education tends to reduce conservatism, probably by cultivating a more critical stance. It is important to note that the actual point at which the curve becomes negative is not a central feature of the model but rather an artifact of the relative sizes of the main and squared effects. The central feature is that the effect of education becomes more liberalizing at the upper levels.

The pattern in the GSS is slightly different. Education has a liberalizing effect with regard to marijuana use and pornography (items not in the NES) as well as abortion. It has the same nonlinear effect on minorities (marginally significant) and defense spending, but a simple conservative effect on domestic spending and no effect on the environment. These last two findings are less different from the NES than they may appear at first glance. As Figure 1 shows, the liberalizing effect of higher education on both these issues in the NES was relatively modest. Furthermore, we have more confidence in the NES because of its smaller standard errors due to larger sample size. In sum, education does tend to have liberalizing effects on the social issues, but the nature and strength of these effects varies considerably.

FAMILY INCOME

Income has a significant conservative effect on domestic spending in both surveys, increasing in the GSS at higher income levels. It also has a conservative effect on minorities and defense spending in the GSS (but not the NES) and on nuclear power in the NES. It exerts a liberalizing influence on abortion in the NES (but not the GSS). The conservative impact of income on the domestic spending issue is consistent with Knoke, but the other inconsistent effects are hard to interpret. In general, it has more conservative than liberal effects on the social issues.

CLASS

The effects of class are quite limited and somewhat idiosyncratic. None of the five issues available in both surveys shows a consistent pattern of class effects. Disregarding the missing category, the only effects are a conservative one for owners on domestic spending in the NES and a marginally significant liberal one for workers on the environment in the GSS. Of the items unique to the NES, supervisors are more conservative on nuclear power and liberal on the ERA, although the latter difference is only marginally significant. In the GSS, supervisors are more conservative about marijuana, and owners are more liberal than workers who are more liberal than supervisors about pornography, although this last difference is only marginally significant. The effects of class on attitudes, in short, are even more inconsistent than those of income. This may reflect the weakness of class as an explanatory variable or the inadequacy of our measure of class.

OCCUPATION

Both surveys show but spotty effects of occupation, though they differ markedly in where those effects lie. The NES shows white-collar conservatism on domestic spending, with the important exception of professionals, and managerial conservatism on the environment. It also shows professionals are relatively liberal on ERA and defense spending,[3] and clerical workers are liberal on abortion. Different categories of blue-collar workers are liberal on nuclear power (skilled), the environment (operatives), and defense spending (unskilled). In the GSS, the only one of these effects which is reliable is the liberalism of operatives on the environment. Instead, the GSS shows a pattern of white-collar liberalism on minorities and finds managers relatively liberal and operatives relatively conservative on abortion. Farmers appear relatively conservative on several issues as well.

RELIGION

The effects of religious preference, while not of central interest to our argument, are worth noting. Protestants consistently show more conservatism across issues and surveys. Catholics, contrary to a popular image, are not socially conservative and economically liberal; only on the issue of abortion are Catholics more conservative than Protestants. Jews and those with no preference show the least conservatism, although the liberalism of those with no preference is less pronounced in the GSS. None of these effects is altered substantially when the born-again variable, available only in the NES, is included in the models. Those claiming a born-again experience tend to be more conservative than others only in regard to abortion and ERA. The only other coefficient which nears significance ($p = .11$) is for nuclear power, and in that case, being born-again is associated with liberalism.

Discussion

Although the NES and GSS results differ in detail, neither shows the simple, pervasive pattern of inverse relationships between SES and conservatism on social issues that has so often been claimed. Of the SES variables, only education comes close to having a pervasive liberalizing effect on social issues. Even here, the effects of education are considerably more complex than anticipated. On some social issues, notably pornography, marijuana use, and abortion—issues that are most likely to be seen as matters of personal morality—education does indeed have a linear liberalizing effect. On others, including minorities and defense spending, the liberalizing influence of education begins with high school and accelerates markedly with increasing years of schooling. On still other social issues, the environment and nuclear power, education has a modest conservative influence up through high school and a modest liberal influence after that. Finally on ERA (and on the environment, if we use the GSS results), education has no net effect at all. In short, even if education tends on balance to have more of a liberal than a conservative impact on social issues, it does so quite unevenly, suggesting that there is no simple relationship between years of schooling and social liberalism.

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[3] On two issues in the NES, minorities and nuclear power, professionals are significantly more liberal when the square of education is not included in the model, but not when it is included. The square of education is significant whether or not we include a dummy for professionals. Therefore, we conclude that professionals appear more liberal on these two issues only because of their rather high educational attainment.

The other socioeconomic variables show very little of the predicted pattern. Income, in fact, has a more marked conservative influence on social issues (minorities, nuclear power, defense spending) than a liberal one (abortion). Occupation shows no overall tendency to white-collar liberalism and blue-collar conservatism. Instead we find sprinkles of social liberalism on different issues across the occupational spectrum, with liberalism on issues like the environment and nuclear power more prevalent in blue-collar ranks and liberalism on issues like minorities, ERA, and abortion more likely in white-collar ranks. The overall pattern, however, is no pattern, as no occupational group shows a consistent political inclination of any kind. Even professionals, the group most likely theoretically to fit the postindustrial pattern, turn up significantly more liberal than others on less than half of the social issues studied. Finally, class exhibits no coherent pattern at all.

Of the eight ''social'' issues, only abortion comes close to fitting the predicted pattern, and even here only the liberalizing effect of education appears clearly on both surveys. The rest show no clear tendency. In contrast, the direct relationship between SES and conservatism on the pivotal economic issue of domestic spending still appears to be quite alive: conservatism on this issue is directly related to income, class, and occupational status and inversely related to education only after high school in the NES and directly related to education and income in the GSS.

In short, the social issues that we have examined do not consistently pit liberal upper strata against conservative lower strata. This, of course, presents problems for the theory of postindustrial politics discussed earlier. If the relationship between SES and conservatism on social issues is not inverse, clearly the development of postmaterialist values and the emergence of social issues cannot explain the decay of the traditional socioeconomic bases of political party allegiance.

Knoke's analysis fares better because he does not aggregate the different dimensions of SES. Our analysis confirms the conservative impact of income on economic issues and the general liberal impact of education on social issues, but does not find that occupation has any clear pattern of liberal effects on social issues. Our main criticism of

Knoke is that he aggregates social issue items into one latent variable putatively measuring social conservatism. The results we found for education suggest why this is problematic: education turned out to have quite a range of effects on different social issues. Constructing a latent variable in these circumstances runs the risk of creating a general measure of social conservatism that combines quite disparate issues or alternatively draws upon only a distinct subset of social issues. Knoke's social conservatism variable in effect does the latter, constructed as it is from items on marijuana, the rights of the accused, and woman's proper role. Had he chosen items on the environment or nuclear power, he might well have found different results.

This leads to our broader point: the rubric "life-style," "value," or "social" issues embraces quite a range of issues. Some rather directly involve matters of individual freedom and constraint; others have to do with the rights of minorities; still others with the costs of technology and economic growth. One should not expect such a disparate set of issues to fit any pattern, "postindustrial" or otherwise. Similarly, the dichotomy between economic issues and social issues (and hence between "interests" and "values") may be overdrawn. If an economic issue generically involves government's role in modifying opportunities for income (and hence goods and services) defined by the market, then even social issues like abortion and marijuana have an economic dimension.[4] Access to legal, inexpensive abortion, for example, whatever moral questions it raises, can have a palpable effect on the life chances of many women. If a social issue generically involves questions of morality and values, then even the basic economic issue of government domestic spending has a social dimension to the extent that such spending is seen to affect the work ethic, the family, or religious beliefs. In short, few actual political issues may be wholly economic or social or reflect simply a materialist/postmaterialist value conflict. Many so-called social issues may not exhibit the predicted socioeconomic polarization, in other words, because they are not purely social issues at all.

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[4] We suspect that economic issues are at least bidimensional and can best illustrate this with the policies of the Reagan administration. The first of these concerns fiscal policies and runs from the liberalism of Keynes to the fiscal conservatism of Friedman. The second dimension concerns the desired amount of inequality in the society; at the liberal end are socialists and at the conservative end are what Walter Heller and Herbert Stein call punk supply-siders. As Heller notes, Keynesianism survived the early 1980s (New York Times, 1987); it seems equally clear that the governmental commitment to reducing inequality lessened and arguably reversed. While we have no data, we suspect that a greater proportion of the American electorate endorses the fiscal conservatism than the supply-side argument.

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Appendix: Question Wordings

NATIONAL ELECTION STUDY

Abortion: There has been some discussion about abortion during recent years. Which one of the opinions on this page best agrees with your view? You can just tell me the number of the opinion you choose.

1. Abortion should never be permitted.
2. Abortion should be permitted only if the life and health of the woman is in danger.
3. Abortion should be permitted if, due to personal reasons, the woman would have difficulty in caring for the child.
4. Abortion should never be forbidden, since one should not require a woman to have a child she doesn't want.

ERA: Do you approve or disapprove of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, sometimes called the ERA Amendment? Do you approve (disapprove) strongly or not strongly?

Defense Spending: Some people believe that we should spend much less money for defense. Others feel that defense spending should be greatly increased. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

1. Greatly decrease defense spending.
.
.
.
7. Greatly increase defense spending.

Government Aid to Minorities: Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks and other minority groups, even if it means giving them preferential treatment. Suppose these people are at one end of the scale at point number 1. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help minorities because they should help themselves. Suppose these people are at the other end at point 7. And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between at points 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Where would you place yourself on this scale or haven't you thought much about this?

1. Government should help minority groups.
.
.
.
7. Minority groups should help themselves.

Busing: There is much discussion about the best way to deal with racial problems. Some people think achieving racial integration of schools is so important that it justifies busing children to schools out of their neighborhoods. Others think letting children go to their neighborhood schools is so important that they oppose busing. Where would you place yourself on this scale or haven't you thought much about this?

1. Bus to achieve integration.
.
.
.
7. Keep children in neighborhood schools.

Civil Rights Progress: Some say that the civil rights people have been trying to push too fast. Others feel they haven't pushed fast enough. How about you: Do you think that civil rights leaders are trying to push too fast, are going too slowly, or are they moving at about the right speed?

1. Too fast
3. About right
5. Too Slowly

Nuclear Power: Some people say that the nation needs to develop new power sources from nuclear energy in order to meet our needs for the future. Other people say that the danger to the environment and the possibility of accidents are too great. What do you think? Are you in favor of building more nuclear power plants, would you favor operating only those that are already built, or would you prefer to see all nuclear power plants closed down?

1. Favor building more plants.
2. Operating only those already built.
3. See all plants closed down.

Environmental Regulations: Present government regulations with regard to pollution and other environmental problems limit full use of some energy sources. Do you think the government should relax environmental protection regulations to increase the use of these energy sources, or should the government keep environmental regulations unchanged even though this may delay the production of more energy? (If relax) Should the government relax governmental regulations a lot, some, or just a little?

1. Keep regulations unchanged.
2. Relax regulations a little.
3. Relax regulations some.
4. Relax regulations a lot.

Domestic Spending: Some people think the government should provide fewer services, even in areas such as health and education, in order to reduce spending. Other people feel it is important for the government to continue the services it now provides even if it means no reduction in spending. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

1. Government should provide many fewer services; reduce spending a lot.

.
.
.

7. Government should continue to provide services; no reduction in spending.

GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY

Abortion: Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if . . . READ EACH STATEMENT AND CIRCLE ONE CODE FOR EACH.

There is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby.
She is married and does not want any more children.

The woman's own health is seriously endangered by the pregnancy.
The family has a very low income and cannot afford any more children.
She became pregnant as a result of rape.
She is not married and does not want to marry the man.
The woman wants it for any reason.

1. Yes
2. No

Defense Spending: Same wording as NES.

Minorities: Here are some opinions other people have expressed in connection with black–white relations. Which statement on the card comes closest to how you, yourself, feel?

Blacks shouldn't push themselves where they're not wanted.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree slightly
3. Disagree slightly
4. Disagree strongly

Environment: We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. Are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on improving or protecting the environment?

1. Too little
2. About right
3. Too much

Domestic Spending: Same wording as NES

Marijuana Legalization: Do you think marijuana should be made legal or not?

1. Should
2. Should not

Pornography: Which of these statements comes closest to your feelings about pornography laws?

1. There should be laws against the distribution of pornography whatever the age.
2. There should be laws against the distribution of pornography to persons under 18.
3. There should be no laws forbidding the distribution of pornography.

557

THE POLLS—A Report
NUCLEAR ANXIETY

TOM W. SMITH

> I am become death, the destroyer of worlds.
> — Vishnu, *Bhagavad Gita*
> (Quoted by J. Robert Oppenheimer,
> 16 July 1945, Trinity, New Mexico)

The doomsday clock of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (1988) reads six minutes to midnight. Should that clock count down and nuclear war erupt, the United States, Soviet Union, and other nuclear powers have enough destructive capacity to kill hundreds of millions and end modern civilization and perhaps, from nuclear winter or from radioactive poisoning, to annihilate all human life.

Some social scientists have argued that the mere threat of nuclear war has been exacting a serious toll on the human race. One group contends that nuclear anxiety (fear of nuclear war and of its consequences) has become a "pervasive and chronic stressor" (Newcomb, 1986) that has been harming the mental health of the population in general and of the young in particular (Mayton, 1986; Klineberg, 1984; Kramer and Marullo, 1985; Lifton, 1982; Yankelovich and Doble, 1986; Russett and Lackey, 1987). Others assert that loss of faith in the future has encouraged a live-for-today hedonism and depressed the savings rate (Slemrod, 1986; Russett and Lackey, 1987). Many have deemed nuclear anxiety as the only sensible response to the nuclear status quo, and those who fail to express such fear are seen as practicing "nuclear denial" (Newcomb, 1986), as suffering from "nuclear numbing" (Lifton, 1982), or as favoring a death wish labeled the Armageddon complex (Farber, 1951).

Others argue that both the level of nuclear anxiety and its psychological and behavioral consequences have been exaggerated (Adelson and Finn, 1985; Howard, 1986; Coles, 1985). They find that nuclear anxiety is not a brooding presence on the public psyche and that people have coped with the reality of nuclear weapons in an appropriate and sensible manner.

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While unable to explore the possible psychological consequences of nuclear anxiety, we will attempt to assess how anxious the American public is about nuclear war: to see how attitudes toward expectations of, survivability after, and concern over nuclear war have changed over the last forty-some years and how nuclear expectations and concerns have compared with other matters.[1]

Recent research has suggested that nuclear anxiety is a complex concept (Diamond and Bachman, 1985; Newcomb, 1986; Zweigenhaft et al., 1987) and its structure and components are not well known. For our purposes we will think of nuclear anxiety as comprising two key elements: expectation of a world/nuclear war and evaluation of the general and personal consequences of a world/nuclear war. The degree of nuclear anxiety can be thought of as combining these two factors.

EXPECTATION OF WAR

First, Americans have viewed nuclear war as more likely than most nationalities (see Expectations of War: Cross-National, below). Since 1982 the United States has ranked no lower than a fourth-place tie in expectation of a world war and has typically been 19 percentage points above the average of 21 other countries in its anticipation of war. However, when compared to other military and nonmilitary events neither world/nuclear war nor the elimination of nuclear weapons and the achievement of world peace have been viewed as very probable (see Expectations of War: Compared to Other Events). People have been more inclined to see the future as a continuation of the status quo, with more arms buildup and repeated guerrilla wars, but no major escalations or breakthroughs.

Second, expectations of world/nuclear war have varied considerably over time (see Expectations of War: Trends).[2] Essentially the likelihood of war has been closely related to current international events and world tensions (Mueller, 1979). Tracking trends is complicated by the broken and varied time series (Erskine, 1963; Mueller, 1979). Expectations of a new world war were high in the early fifties while the conflict in Korea was underway and then subsided in the late fifties (Mueller, 1979). The various crises in Berlin and Cuba in the early sixties restirred expectations. Fear probably peaked during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, but the lack of any appropriate surveys at that time makes this impossible to confirm. Likewise, the dearth of world/nuclear war expectation questions during the late sixties and seventies leaves this period unmapped.

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[1] In locating questions on nuclear war, extensive use was made of POLL, the computerized data archive of survey questions at the Roper Center. Published material from the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan, the Gallup Organization, NORC, and other sources were also examined. Only a part of the survey data compiled could be presented here; additional material is available in cited references and from the author.

[2] We have largely restricted our coverage of questions about the likelihood of war to those specifying "world" or "nuclear" war. These two terms cover different domains, but between 1956 and 1973 60%–76% of the public thought that a world war would involve nuclear weapons (see Expectations of War: Trends). We have usually excluded questions on "war" in general since these cover an entirely different domain of events and since "war" is judged as much more probable than "world" or "nuclear" war (see Expectations of War: Compared to Other Events). We did inspect questions on "war" in general to help clarify changes in the late seventies and early eighties. See also Mueller, 1973, 1979.

Expectations of war in general and world/nuclear war in particular then rose in the late seventies and early eighties in response to the demise of détente and such specific events as the Iranian hostage seizure and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Likelihood of war appears to have peaked in 1982–83 as further crises rocked the international scene and the peace movement surged in Europe (de Boer, 1985) and the nuclear freeze gained ground in the United States (Kohut, 1982; Kramer, Kalick, and Milburn, 1983). Since then a succession of Reagan–Gorbachev summits culminating in the recent Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) treaty and a diminution of spot crises have led to a notable decline in the public's evaluation of the probability of world/nuclear war.

Overall, expectation of war has been episodic, with calculated probabilities driven up and down by the rise and fall of international conflict. Expectations appear to have been especially high in the early fifties, sixties, and eighties, but the awesome accumulation of nuclear weapons does not seem to have led to any secular increase in the expectation of world/nuclear war over the last 44 years.

NUCLEAR SURVIVAL

Evaluation of the consequences of a nuclear war, however, appears to have become increasingly pessimistic, at least since the early sixties (see Survivability: Live Through; Yankelovich and Doble, 1986). While 43% of the public rated their chances of personal survival as "poor" in 1961, this rose to 77% in 1984; in 1982 51% thought that their chances of surviving even a limited nuclear war were "poor." Similarly, the public appears to be increasingly ignorant of civil defense efforts to deal with nuclear war and unsupportive of efforts to provide for more bomb shelters (see Survivability: Civil Defense/Shelters).

NUCLEAR WORRIES

Yet despite the growing concern over the possibility and desirability of postnuclear survival and the at least periodic surges in war anticipation, nuclear war has not become the overarching concern or worry of the public (See Concerns and Worries: Compared to Other Events; Schuman, Ludwig, and Krosnick, 1986). Other issues such as the economy, the environment, and the budget deficit have topped the public's list of concerns while worries about nuclear war have generally ranked in the upper third in the public's listings. When queried as to why they had selected some problem other than nuclear war, most people indicated either that they did not think nuclear war would occur or at least that it was not an immediate threat (Schuman, Ludwig, and Krosnick, 1986).

Over time the level of concern has generally covaried with expectations of war, rising in the late fifties, early sixties, and again from the mid-seventies to early eighties, before leveling off and probably declining in the mid-eighties (see Concerns and Worries: Trends).

PRESIDENTIAL POLICIES

For many people the solution to nuclear anxiety has been negotiations with the Soviets to reduce tensions and to control, and ultimately eliminate, nuclear weapons. In evaluating Reagan's nuclear policies in general and his arms negotiations with the Soviets in particular, the public has consistently increased their approval when summits and START/INF talks showed promise (see Evaluations of Presidential Efforts). This is most sharply shown in the increased approval that followed the Geneva summit (11/85) and the completion of the INF treaty at the Washington summit (12/87).

But nuclear war and disarmament are complex matters, and there is no simple relationship between nuclear anxiety and support for disarmament (Mueller, 1979; Diamond and Bachman, 1985). In particular the public's desire for negotiations and arms reductions has been tempered by serious reservations about Soviet intentions. The public has shown long-term concern about Soviet expansionism, and mistrust of the USSR has been deeply ingrained (Smith, 1983, 1987). Reflecting this concern, the public has wavered from 1985 to 1987 over whether the nuclear arms buildup or falling behind the Soviets was more likely to lead to war (see Consequences and Alternatives). Similarly, many people also look to other solutions to the nuclear threat. For example, a majority of the public has believed that the Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars") would make the world safer (Graham and Kramer, 1985). In addition, many people believe that fundamental improvements in U.S.–Soviet relations rather than nuclear treaties such as INF and START are the best way to make the world safer. Yet despite these reservations and alternative solutions, the public has rallied around the INF treaty and lauded Reagan and Gorbachev for their efforts.

Overall, nuclear anxiety does not appear to be a raging neurosis. Expectations of nuclear war and worries over nuclear arms generally follow the fever chart of international crises and have not shown any long-term, secular growth.[3] Nor are nuclear war or nuclear arms deemed to be among the most probable of future military consequences or the most crucial or pressing of problems. Only on the issue of nuclear survival do we find a decided and monotonic trend, with the public's evaluation of the consequence of nuclear war becoming more pessimistic over time.

Americans recognize nuclear war and peace are complex issues, and nuclear anxiety does not translate simply into support for disarmament. To deal with the threat of nuclear war, Americans favor both military preparedness and negotiations with the Soviets.

ABC—ABC News
ABC/WP—ABC News/*Washington Post*
Black—Gordon S. Black Corp.
Clements—Mark Clements Research
Gallup—Gallup Organization
Harris—Louis Harris and Associates
LAT—*Los Angeles Times*
MK—Marttila and Kiley
MOR—Market Opinion Research
NBC/WSJ—NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*
NORC—National Opinion Research Center
NORC-GSS—National Opinion Research Center's General Social Survey
PAF—Public Affairs Forum, conducted by YSW
Roper—Roper Organization
SRC-MF—Survey Research Center's Monitoring the Future
YSW—Yankelovich, Skelley, and White

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[3] Most students of nuclear anxiety argue that it has increased over time (Yankelovch and Doble, 1986; Newcomb, 1986; Mayton and Delamater, 1986; Kramer, Kalick, and Milburn, 1983; Diamond and Bachman, 1985; Schuman and Scott, 1988). The sometimes explicit and usually implied equation is that more nuclear weapons lead to more anxiety. Much of the "trends" literature, however, is based on questionable data or pure conjecture. We found periods of increased expectation of war and of heightened concern (such as in the early eighties [Schuman and Scott, 1988]), but no long-term monotonic trend.

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Expectations of War

CROSS-NATIONAL

Gallup: I'd like your opinion of the chances of a world war breaking out in the next ten years. If 10 means it is absolutely certain that a world war will break out and 0 means that there is no chance of a world war breaking out, where on this scale of 10 to 0 would you rate the chances of a world war breaking out in the next 10 years?

	50% chance or greater				
	1982	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
United States	49	52	47	42	49
Australia	51	50	43	38	38
Uruguay	32	37	40	38	38
Brazil	33	39	37	34	34
Canada	41	43	39	28	34
Argentina	28	38	36	24	30
Philippines	24	36	40	37	27
Ireland	36	39	29	25	25
Belgium	30	24	26	18	24
France	39	41	32	26	24
Italy	25	31	23	19	22
Spain	27	61	32	23	22
Norway	30	29	25	21	21
Great Britain	29	31	26	18	20
Denmark	24	28	25	17	18
Greece	14	19	19	13	18
Luxembourg	35	34	31	17	18
Switzerland	32	30	29	25	18
West Germany	27	26	23	20	18
Finland	23	29	22	11	17
Japan	25	32	25	18	15
Sweden	27	28	20	16	15
The Netherlands	34	28	23	19	14

COMPARED TO OTHER EVENTS

Gallup: Looking ahead to (1980/1985/1990), that is (in 20 years time/20 year's time/20 years from now), which of these things do you think (will have happened/will happen) by then . . .?

	Will Happen		
	3/60	*2/65*	*10/69*
Russia and the West will be living peacefully together	40%	30%	21%
All countries will have ceased to manufacture H-bombs or anything like them	38	24	14
Russian Communism will have vanished	18	21	7
Capitalism and the Western way of life will have collapsed	10	—	9
An atomic war between Russia and America	10	—	7
Civilization as we know it will be in ruins	8	11	10
	(—)	(1,627)	(1,575)

NORC: Now here are some cards. On these cards are printed various possible future situations which may exist in our civil defense. On this folder are pockets which show how likely something is. As before, the zero pocket on the bottom of the folder stands for something that is impossible or nearly impossible. The top pocket—10—stands for something you consider certain or just about certain to happen. Five means that something is as likely to happen as not—the chances are about fifty-fifty. Would you please put these cards into the pockets according to how likely it is that each situation will come about in five years or so—about 1968? You may use as many pockets as you want, and any number of cards may go into any pocket.

	12/63										
	Certain								*Impossible*		
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
There will be fallout shelters throughout the nation, and also shelters against nuclear blast, heat, and chemical and biological agents in large cities	17%	11	10	8	8	15	7	6	6	5	7
There will be no shelters against nuclear weapons because arms control and disarmament steps will make nuclear war impossible	6%	3	4	5	7	16	5	7	9	12	26
How likely is it that there will be disarmament with adequate controls in the next five years?	4%	3	6	5	5	34	6	7	8	5	17
Try to think back a few months again. About six months ago, how likely do you think disarmament was?	3%	3	5	4	4	19	7	10	11	7	27
How likely is it that there will be a major war involving nuclear weapons in the next five years or so?	3%	2	3	2	3	33	6	7	8	6	26
						(1,401)					

NORC-GSS: I'm going to read you some possible military situations the U.S. might face in the next ten years. (HAND CARD) Some people feel these situations are *certain to happen* (think of these as point 7 on the scale), others think these situations *won't happen* at all (think of these as point 1 on the scale). And some people have opinions somewhere in between. For each of these possible military situations, please give me your best guess as to how likely it is to happen.

				3/84				
	Certain					*Won't Happen*		*Don't Know*
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	8
Repeated guerilla wars against left-wing rebels	33%	19	18	14	5	2	4	6
Peace but increasing arms build by the U.S. and Russia	19%	16	20	22	8	6	6	3
A conventional ground war involving thousands of troops	15%	12	20	24	13	6	6	3
An agreement with the Russians to reduce atomic arms by both sides	5%	5	11	25	16	17	19	3
An all-out atomic war	7%	3	11	22	14	18	22	2
Elimination of atomic weapons by both U.S. and Russia	3%	2	4	8	8	15	57	3
				(1,473)				

Harris: Do you think ——— will happen in your lifetime, or not?

		12/87	
	Yes	*No*	*Not Sure*
An end to war between nations that have nuclear bombs	34%	60	6
An end to discrimination in the U.S. against blacks and other racial minorities	30%	65	5
A decline in terrorism and violence	25%	69	6
An end to all wars	16%	79	5
An end to poverty in America	16%	80	4
Elimination of starvation in the world	13%	84	3
		(1,250)	

TRENDS

NORC-GSS: Do you expect the United States to fight in another world war within the next ten years?

	7/50	*9/50*	*10/50*	*11/50*	*12/50*
Yes	80%	74%	66%	79%	83%
	(1,302)	(1,284)	(1,305)	(1,275)	(1,258)
	1/51	*3/51*	*4/51*	*5/51*	*8/51*
Yes	74%	64%	70%	67%	74%
	(1,236)	(1,237)	(1,289)	(1,282)	(1,292)
	10/51	*3/76*	*3/85*	*3/86*	*3/88*
Yes	71%	44%	43%	46%	40%
	(1,299)	(718)	(778)	(1,443)	(987)

Gallup: Do you think the United States will find itself in another world war within, say, the next year? How about within the next five years?

Within Five Years

	10/50	*3/51*	*7/52*	*1/52*	*12/52*	*4/53*
Yes	65%	76%	66%	65%	54%	46%
No	20	16	21	21	27	28
Don't know	15	8	13	14	20	26
	(2,981)	(1,368)	(2,009)	(1,944)	(1,421)	(1,468)
	10/53	*12/54*	*4/57*[a]	*11/57*[b]	*4/58*[b]	
Yes	56%	50%	35%	34%	24%	
No	27	31	49	43	50	
Don't know	18	19	17	23	26	
	(1,488)	(1,446)	(1,689)	(1,535)	(1,435)	
	5/59[b]	*8/59*[b]	*10/59*[b]	*5/60*[b]	*7/60*[b]	*3/61*[b]
Yes	23%	19%	31%	34%	47%	32%
No	53	56	32	47	39	50
Don't know	24	25	37	19	15	18
	(1,524)	(1,463)	(1,396)	(2,997)	(2,760)	(3,508)
	5/61[b]	*9/61*[b]	*4/63*[b]	*6/65*[b]		
Yes	44%	53%	24%	34%		
No	39	34	58	53		
Don't know	17	13	18	12		
	(3,519)	(3,440)	(3,252)	(3,536)		

[a] Everybody hopes there will not be another war, but what is your best guess, do you think there will be another world war within the next five years?

[b] Do you think we are likely to get into another world war in the next five years?

NORC: Do you expect the United States to get into an all-out war with Russia during the next two years?
IF NO: Do you think we can avoid a big war with Russia entirely or will have to fight them sooner or later?

	6/55	*8/55*	*10/55*	*11/55*
Yes, all-out war	19%	14%	9%	15%
No				
Have to fight sooner or later	41	40	30	37
Can avoid big war	34	40	43	34
Don't know if can avoid	—	—	8	6
Don't know	6	6	10	8
	(1,263)	(1,262)	(527)	(1,276)
	1/56	*4/56*	*9/56*	*11/56*
Yes, all-out war	14%	14%	12%	23%
No				
Have to fight sooner or later	36	33	38	33
Can avoid war	34	39	42	34
Don't know if can avoid	—	7	—	—
Don't know	15	7	8	8
	(1,238)	(1,224)	(1,263)	(1,287)

Clements: Do you think we are closer to World War III than we were a year ago? (Women 18–65 years old)

	9/82	*8/83*	*8/84*	*10/85*	*10/86*	*8–9/87*
Yes	52%	43%	40%	43%	31%	39%
No	38	52	56	54	65	56
Not sure	10	5	4	3	4	5
	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(800)	(800)	(800)

Gallup: I'd like your opinion of the chances of a world war breaking out in the next 10 years. If 10 means it is absolutely certain that a world war will break out and 0 means that there is no chance of a world war breaking out, where on this scale of 10 to 0 would you rate the chances of world war breaking out in the next 10 years?

	1/83	*12/83*	*12/84*	*11/85*	*10/86*[a]	*12/87*
More than 50%						
(Points 6–10)	29%	33%	28%	23%	24%	23%
(Point 5)	20	19	19	19	25	14
Less than 50%						
(Points 0–4)	42	40	45	53	51	54
No opinion	9	8	8	5		9
	(1,038)	(1,037)	(1,057)	(1,008)	(1,559)	(505)

[a] 10/86 combined 0–4 and no opinion.

Gallup: If there should be another world war, do you think the H-bomb (Hydrogen bomb) will be used against us?

	1/53[a]	*6/56*	*11/56*	*4/57*	*4/58*
Will be used	53%	63%	60%	71%	76%
Will not be used	18	18	17	16	13
No opinion	8	20	23	13	12
Don't know H-bomb	21	—	—	—	—
	(1,549)	(2,068)	(1,502)	(1,659)	(1,432)

	2/63	*9/73*[b]
Will be used	60%	67%
Will not be used	23	24
No opinion	17	9
	(2,843)	(1,503)

[a] If the United States should get into another world war, do you think the hydrogen bomb would be used against this country?

[b] If another world war were to break out, do you think nuclear bombs and weapons are likely to be used, or not?

Gallup, MK: How likely do you think we are to get into a nuclear war within the next 10 years—very likely, fairly likely, fairly unlikely, or very unlikely?

	6/81	*5/83*	*11/83*	*9/85*[a]	*10/87*[a]
Very likely	19%	13%	16%	11%	13%
Fairly likely	28	21	24	20	17
Fairly unlikely	26	31	28	31	36
Very unlikely	23	27	25	33	31
No opinion	4	9	7	5	2
	(1,526)	(1,540)	(1,504)	(1,008)	(1,002)

[a] Thinking now about nuclear war how likely are we to . . . (MK)

ABC/WP: What do you think the chances are that there will be a nuclear war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the next few years—do you think it is very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely?

	4/82	*4/83*	*10/83*	*11/83*	*11/85*
Very likely	13%	10%	13%	12%	8%
Somewhat likely	28	27	30	23	17
Somewhat unlikely	33	33	30	35	31
Very unlikely	23	28	26	27	43
No opinion	2	3	1	3	1
	(1,521)	(1,516)	(1,506)	(1,505)	(1,507)

Harris, YSW: How likely do you think it is that this country will become involved in a nuclear war in the next twenty years—very likely, somewhat likely, or not likely at all?

	3/82	*4/83*	*9/83*	*11/83*	*11/85 (YSW)*
Very likely	32%	25%	29%	32%	12%
Somewhat likely	37	33	36	35	39
Not likely at all	29	39	34	30	45
Not sure	3	3	1	3	4
	(1,599)	(1,253)	(1,255)	(1,252)	(1,020)

LAT: Do you think nuclear war is inevitable, or do you think that nuclear war may never occur? (If inevitable) How long do you think it will be before a nuclear war happens—in how many years?

	1/85	*11/85*
0–5 years	2%	2%
6–10 years	5	5
11+ years	22	18
Never	54	58
Don't know	17	17
	(1,454)	(2,041)

Survivability

LIVE THROUGH

Gallup, PAF: If we should happen to get into an all out nuclear war, what do you think your chances would be of living through it—very good, poor, or just 50-50?

	8/61	*2/63*	*6/81*	*12/83*	*5/84 (PAF)*
Very good	8%	5%	5%	3%	4%
Poor	43	52	60	69	77
Just 50-50	40	38	33	25	17
Don't know	9	5	3	3	2
	(3,148)	(3,527)	(671)	(757)	(505)

Gallup: If we should get into a limited nuclear war in which the Soviet Union attacked some of our military bases and installations with nuclear weapons, what do you think would be your chances of living through it—good, poor, or just 50-50?

	9/81	*3/82*
Good	9%	9%
Poor	43	51
50-50	43	38
Don't know	5	2
	(671)	(757)

Gallup: In case of another world war, how much chance do you think there is of your (this) community/city being attacked with atom bombs—a good chance, a fair chance, or a poor chance?

	10/50	*7/53*[a]	*4/54*[a]
Good chance	25%	32%	33%
Fair chance	28	24	24
Poor/not much chance	39	37	39
No opinion	8	7	4
	(1,357)	(1,545)	(1,482)

[a] ". . . a good chance, a fair chance, or not much chance?"

CIVIL DEFENSE/SHELTERS

Gallup: Do you happen to know where the nearest public bomb shelter is?
ABC: Would you know where the nearest nuclear bomb shelter was if you needed to find it right now?

	10/76	*12/78*	*6/81*	*4/82 (ABC)*
Yes	26%	24%	20%	21%
	(1,559)	(1,552)	(1,526)	(1,005)

Gallup: It has been proposed that every new house built in the United States be required to have a bomb shelter, with the federal government paying most of the cost. Would you favor or oppose such a plan?

	12/76	*12/78*	*6/81*
Favor	37%	36%	35%
Oppose	55	56	58
No opinion	7	9	7
	(1,559)	(1,552)	(1,526)

Concerns and Worries

COMPARED TO OTHER EVENTS

YSW: People all have different concerns about what's going on in the world these days, but you can't worry about everything all the time. Will you tell me for each of the following whether *right now* this is something that worries you personally *a lot, a little,* or *not at all?* (Registered voters)

				A Lot			
	6/83	*9/83*	*12/83*	*1/84*	*7/85*	*9/85*	*11/85*
The state of the United States economy	59%	57	50	54	51	54	61
The pollution of our environment	58%	56	46	51	46	—	—
Soviet military build-up	53%	66	61	—	—	—	51
More and more countries turning communist	51%	54	48	48	—	—	—
The possibility of nuclear war	51%	59	60	52	48	44	51
The growing influence of communism within the United States	45%	48	43	41	—	—	—
A nuclear plant accident	38%	38	37	37	—	—	—
Threats to our health all around us	—	41%	31	36	40	—	—
The possibility of the United States becoming involved in a conventional, non-nuclear war	—	—	55%	45	28	—	—
The increase of crime in my community	—	—	53%	52	45	—	—
The size of the federal deficit	—	—	—	—	55%	59	66
Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union	—	—	—	—	42%	42	46
The arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union	—	—	—	—	—	—	52%
	(1,007)	(1,016)	(1,000)	(1,021)	(1,013)	(1,014)	(1,020)

Roper: Here is a list of some different kinds of problems people might or might not be facing 25 to 50 years from now. Would you go down that list, and for each one tell me whether you think it will or will not be a serious problem your children or grandchildren will be facing 25 to 50 years from now?

		12/82	
	Serious	*Not Serious*	*Don't Know*
Severe air pollution	72%	24	5
Severe water pollution	71%	25	4
Atomic warfare	71%	21	8
Lack of privacy	63%	27	10
Shortage of water supplies	59%	34	7
Shortage of energy supplies	59%	35	6
Restrictions and regimentation because of the increasing complexity of life	54%	32	14
Overpopulation	52%	42	5
Preserving our democratic form of government	51%	38	10
Shortage of food	49%	46	5
Decreasing temperature of the world	26%	49	25
		(2,000)	

MOR: For the following problems and issues, please tell me how serious you think it is using a zero-to-ten scale where ten means it is an extremely serious problem at the present time, and zero means it is not much of a problem now. You can use any of the numbers from zero to ten; the higher the number you use, the more serious you think the problem currently is . . .

	1/86 *Mean Score*
The federal budget deficit	8.0
Waste and fraud in federal spending for national defense	7.4
The nuclear arms race	7.3
Waste and fraud in federal spending for domestic programs	7.2
Unemployment	6.9
The fairness of the federal income tax system	6.9
Inflation	6.3
The effectiveness of the U.S. military as a fighting force	5.6
	(1,500)

Black: The League of Women Voters is sponsoring many debates this year involving the (1988) presidential candidates. I'm going to read a list of things you might want to ask if you had a chance to question the candidates at the debate. For each one, please tell me whether it is very important (4), somewhat important (3), not very important (2), not at all important (1) that the candidate explain how he will do the following things:

	1/88 *Mean*
Cut the federal deficit	3.75
Improve public education	3.65
Reduce threat of nuclear war	3.58
Create jobs	3.56
Make the U.S. more competitive	3.53
Stop the spread of AIDS	3.53
Help the poor and disadvantaged	3.51
Keep taxes down	3.48
Stabilize the stock market	3.05
	(1,406)

TRENDS

Gallup: How worried are you about the chance of a world war breaking out in which atom bombs and hydrogen bombs would be used—very worried, fairly worried, or not worried at all?

	3/58	*2/60*	*6/61*
Very worried	14%	20%	22%
Fairly worried	42	40	37
Not worried at all	41	38	38
No opinion	3	2	3
	(1,601)	(3,121)	(2,832)

Roper: Here is a list of some different kinds of problems people might or might not be facing 25 to 50 years from now. Would you go down the list, and for each one tell me whether you think it will or will not be a serious problem your children or grandchildren will be facing 25 to 50 years from now?
Atomic warfare.

	12/74	*12/76*	*12/78*	*12/80*	*12/82*	*12/84*
Will be serious problem	47%	59%	55%	65%	71%	65%
Will not be serious problem	41	30	35	26	21	27
Don't know	12	12	11	9	8	8
	(2,005)	(2,000)	(1,997)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(1,977)

SRC-MF: Of all the problems facing the nation today, how often do you worry about each of the following? (high school seniors)
Chance of nuclear war.

	1975	*1976*	*1977*	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*
Never	22.9%	20.8%	19.1%	18.8%	12.9%	9.0%
Seldom	36.9	37.1	33.9	30.9	27.7	23.6
Sometimes	32.6	31.7	32.3	34.9	39.3	40.5
Often	7.6	10.5	14.8	15.3	20.1	26.9

	1981	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Never	10.0%	6.5%	9.8%	8.1%	9.0%	7.6%
Seldom	25.7	21.8	23.6	22.5	26.5	23.3
Sometimes	40.7	41.3	41.1	39.9	39.9	41.6
Often	23.6	30.3	25.5	29.5	24.6	27.5
					(3,271)	(3,063)

Evaluations of Presidential Efforts

Harris: Now let me ask you about some specific things President Reagan has done. How would you rate him on his handling of nuclear arms reduction negotiations with the Russians—excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	4/82	*5/82*	*7/82*	*8/82*	*2/83*	*3/83*	*4/83*
Positive	34%	41%	39%	36%	32%	29%	30%
Negative	58	53	56	60	63	64	63
Not sure	8	6	5	4	5	7	7
	(1,258)	(1,251)	(1,250)	(1,254)	(1,248)	(1,254)	(1,250)

	4/83	*6/83*	*7/83*	*9/83*	*10/83*	*11/83*	*12/83*
Positive	33%	31%	32%	40%	42%	39%	35%
Negative	64	63	61	54	52	55	59
Not sure	3	6	7	6	6	6	6
	(1,250)	(1,250)	(1,252)	(1,255)	(1,254)	(1,252)	(1,249)

	1/84	*2/84*	*3/84*	*6/84*	*9/84*	*10/84*	*12/84*
Positive	38%	36%	34%	33%	36%	40%	35%
Negative	58	59	61	63	62	56	62
Not sure	4	5	5	4	2	4	3
	(1,251)	(1,262)V	(1,227)V	(1,251)V	(1,211)V	(1,998)V	(1,255)

	3/85	*5/85*	*5/85*	*7/85*	*9/85*	*11/85*	*1/86*
Positive	44%	39%	40%	38%	45%	49%	54%
Negative	52	57	56	58	53	49	43
Not sure	4	4	4	4	2	2	3
	(1,256)	(1,256)	(1,274)	(1,254)	(1,255)	(1,258)	(1,254)

	4/86	*8/86*	*9/86*	*11/87*
Positive	46%	42%	50%	52%
Negative	49	55	46	45
Not sure	5	3	4	3
	(1,252)	(1,248)	(2,695)	(1,251)

NOTES: Positive = Excellent + Good; Negative = Only fair + Poor; V = Likely voters.

Gallup: Now, let me ask about some specific foreign and domestic problems. As I read off each problem, one at a time, would you tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way President Reagan is handling that problem? The nuclear disarmament negotiations with the Soviet Union.

	8/83	*10/83*	*11/83*	*11/84*	*1/85*	*3/85*	*5/85*	*7/85*
Approve	39%	44%	47%	47%	52%	49%	49%	49%
Disapprove	38	40	37	38	32	35	37	33
No opinion	23	16	16	15	16	16	14	18
	(1,506)	(1,503)	(1,504)	(1,518)	(1,523)	(1,571)	(1,528)	(1,536)

	1/86	*4/86*	*7/86*	*4/87*	*6/87*	*9/87*	*3/88*[a]
Approve	57%	46%	51%	42%	47%	54%	61%
Disapprove	27	36	33	46	43	35	28
No opinion	16	18	16	12	10	11	11
	(1,570)	(1,552)	(1,539)	(1,571)	(1,005)	(1,009)	(1,003)

[a] Nuclear arms negotiations with the Soviet Union.

YSW: Do you think that President Reagan's nuclear arms policy increases or decreases the threat of nuclear war—or makes no difference in this respect? (registered voters)

	3/82	*7/85*	*11/85*
Increases threat	32%	25%	25%
Decreases threat	23	25	21
Makes no difference	39	43	46
Not sure	6	8	8
	(1,019)	(1,013)	(1,020)

Consequences and Alternatives

Gallup: In your opinion, which of the following increases the chances of nuclear war more—a continuation of the nuclear-arms build-up here and in the Soviet Union, or the U.S. (United States) falling behind the Soviet Union in nuclear weaponry?

	2/85	*11/85*	*4/86*	*4/87*
Arms build-up	41%	45%	39%	42%
Falling behind	43	33	47	41
No opinion	16	22	14	17
	(1,557)	(1,540)	(1,522)	(4,244)

Gallup: In your opinion, would developing this system ("Star Wars—a space-based defense against nuclear attack") make the world safer from nuclear destruction, or less safe? (Asked of those who said they followed "Star Wars" discussion very or fairly closely)

	1/85[a]	*10/85*	*10/86*
Make world safer	50%	44%	51%
Make no difference, don't know	17	27	20
Make world less safe	33	29	30
% Asked question	67%	61%	100%
	(1,528)	(1,540)	(1,559)

[a] In your opinion . . . destruction, or not?

ABC/WP: Do you think a medium-range missile agreement will increase the chances of nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union, decrease the chances of nuclear war or won't it have much effect on the chances for nuclear war? Will it increase/decrease the chances of nuclear war a lot or just a little?

	11–12/87
Increase a lot	4%
Increase a little	5
Won't have much effect	48
Decrease a little	27
Decrease a lot	13
Don't know	3
	(1,000)

MK: Which of the following statements best express your point of view: Arms control agreements like INF (Intermediate Nuclear Forces) and START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) will make the world a safer place. Or: Until we change our fundamental relationship with the Soviets, even the most comprehensive arms control agreements will not make the world safer.

	3/88
Treaties make world safer	38%
Improved relationship needed	58
Not sure	4
	(1,004)

Black: President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev recently signed the INF (Intermediate Nuclear Force) treaty, an agreement to limit American and Soviet medium-range missiles. Congress is currently debating whether or not to ratify the treaty. Would you vote for or against a (1988) presidential candidate who supported the INF treaty, or wouldn't it make much difference to you?

	1/88
Vote for	62%
No difference	26
Vote against	5
Depends on candidate	1
Don't know	7
	(1,406)

NBC/WSJ: Do you think the United States Senate should ratify the arms control agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union that eliminates medium-range missiles from Europe, or not?

	1/88
Yes	67%
No	20
Not sure	13
	(2,392)

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Articles

Self-Interest and Public Opinion Toward Smoking Restrictions and Cigarette Taxes 1
DONALD PHILIP GREEN and ANN ELIZABETH GERKEN

Economic News on Television: The Determinants of Coverage 17
DAVID E. HARRINGTON

The Missing Link: Political Activists and Support for School Prayer 41
JOHN C. GREEN and JAMES L. GUTH

The Impact of Televised Speeches and Foreign Travel on Presidential Approval 58
DENNIS M. SIMON and CHARLES W. OSTROM, JR.

Democratic Incumbents and the 1984 Presidential Election: A Case Study 83
KURT C. SCHLICHTING

Determinants of Public Opinion About AIDS 98
HORST STIPP and DENNIS KERR

The Polls

Review: Question Wording and Reports of Survey Results: The Case of Louis Harris and Associates and Aetna Life and Casualty 107
JON A. KROSNICK

Report: Public Opinion About United States Intervention in El Salvador and Nicaragua 114
RICHARD SOBEL

Comments and Responses

Comment: The *Digest* Poll Rides Again! 129
DON CAHALAN

Poll Review Response: The USIA Central American Surveys 134
WILLIAM J. MILLARD

Book Reviews

Jean M. Converse, *Survey Research in the United States: Roots and Emergence, 1890–1960* 136
JAMES A. DAVIS

Leslie Kish, *Statistical Design for Research* 139
THOMAS D. COOK

Richard F. Hamilton and James D. Wright, *The State of the Masses* 142
JAMES R. BENIGER

National Center for Health Statistics, *An Experimental Comparison of Telephone and Personal Health Interview Surveys*, by Charles F. Cannell, Robert M. Groves, Lou J. Magilavy, Nancy A. Mathiowetz, Peter V. Miller, and Owen T. Thornberry 145
ED BLAIR

Celinda C. Lake with Pat Callbeck Harper, *Public Opinion Polling: A Handbook for Public Interest and Citizen Advocacy Groups* 147
IRVING CRESPI

Arthur C. Klein and Dava Sobel, *Backache Relief* 149
HOWARD SCHUMAN

MANUSCRIPT REFEREES, 1987–1988 151

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS 153

SELF-INTEREST AND PUBLIC OPINION TOWARD SMOKING RESTRICTIONS AND CIGARETTE TAXES

DONALD PHILIP GREEN AND
ANN ELIZABETH GERKEN

Abstract A burgeoning literature suggests that self-interest has little influence on policy preferences. In sharp contrast are the findings discussed in this paper: we show that self-interest plays a decisive role in shaping attitudes toward smoking restrictions and cigarette taxes. Data from two random samples of California adults collected by the Field Institute in April 1987 and February 1984 indicate that nonsmokers are far more enthusiastic about tightening smoking restrictions and increasing cigarette taxes than smokers, particularly heavy smokers. We conclude by discussing several explanations for the apparent discrepancy between these results and the pattern of null findings characteristic of the self-interest literature.

Consider the plight of smokers in America today. Unable to indulge their addictions in peace, they find themselves bombarded by an endless stream of intimidating warnings about the harms of tobacco. Moreover, as gloomy pronouncements by medical experts alert the nation to the evils of secondhand smoke, policy has grown increasingly hostile to cigarette use (Troyer, 1984). The past decade has witnessed the proliferation of smoking restrictions in elevators, restaurants, workplaces, and public buildings. Meanwhile, rising "sin taxes" on tobacco have made cigarette consumption increasingly expensive.

While smokers' freedom to inhale burning tobacco is threatened by public policy, nonsmokers, whose health and comfort are adversely affected by secondhand smoke, stand to benefit from measures that restrict or tax cigarette consumption. The dictates of personal comfort

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thus place smokers and nonsmokers at cross-purposes. The question is, Does this conflict of interest give rise to divergent attitudes? Do smokers and nonsmokers differ in their opinions concerning smoking restrictions and cigarette taxes?

Interestingly enough, a burgeoning literature on the relationship between interests and policy preferences suggests that a difference of opinion is unlikely. One study after another has shown that "self-interest" has little apparent influence on political attitudes: the unemployed are generally no more favorable toward jobs programs than the employed (Lau and Sears, 1981; Sears et al., 1980; Schlozman and Verba, 1979); the medically indigent are no more enthusiastic about government health insurance than the fully insured (Sears et al., 1980; Colombotos and Kirchner, 1986); parents of children in public schools are not distinctive in their support for aid to education (Ross, 1985; Cataldo and Holm, 1983; Sears and Citrin, 1982; Jennings, 1979; Key, 1961); whites adversely affected by affirmative action are no more likely to oppose preferential hiring than other whites (Kinder and Sanders, 1986); those subject to the draft are not especially opposed to military intervention or escalation (Lau, Brown, and Sears, 1978; Mueller, 1973; Barton, 1968; Rugg and Cantril, 1940); employed women do not differ from homemakers in their attitudes concerning the ERA or affirmative action for women (Sears and Huddy, forthcoming; Shapiro and Mahajan, 1986; Green, 1985); and those affected by a proposed rise in the legal drinking age are no more opposed to the proposal than young people over 21 (Sivacek and Crano, 1982). Similarly, victims of crime (Sears et al., 1980; Reiss, 1972), rising energy costs (Sears et al., 1978), mandatory college examinations (Sivacek and Crano, 1982), and housing shortages (Regan and Fazio, 1977) seem not to express distinctive policy attitudes.[1]

Yet, as we shall demonstrate below, smokers and nonsmokers—who are otherwise quite similar in their political views—take very different positions on such issues as smoking restrictions and cigarette taxes.[2] Based on data from two random samples of California adults collected by the Field Institute, we find that nonsmokers are far more enthusiastic about tightening smoking restrictions and increasing cigarette taxes than smokers, particularly heavy smokers. We conclude by discussing several explanations for the apparent discrepancy between these results and the pattern of null findings characteristic of the self-interest literature.

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[1] It should be pointed out that when self-interest is defined so as to coincide with racial or ethnic group interest, the apparent influence of vested interest is much greater. For example, blacks are consistently more supportive of government aid to minorities than whites.

[2] This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Rosenstock, Stergachis, and Heaney (1986), who find that among employees at a health maintenance organization in Washington State, smokers and nonsmokers differed markedly in their attitudes toward a smoking ban in the HMO. Our analysis extends and refines this result using a sample of the general population and a broader range of policy questions.

A Political Profile of Smokers and Nonsmokers

Before comparing the attitudes of smokers and nonsmokers on issues concerning tobacco consumption, let us first examine whether the two groups differ in their general political outlook. After all, if smokers are more opposed to tax increases and government intervention as a matter of general principle, then their opposition to cigarette taxes and smoking restrictions may be spurious. Our data, however, provide little support for this interpretation. A California Poll conducted in April 1987 by the Field Institute shows that smokers and nonsmokers have similar partisan and ideological affinities.[3] If anything, the data presented in Table 1 suggest that nonsmokers are the more conservative of the two groups. Nonsmokers, therefore, have no special fondness for taxes and government regulation. At the level of specific political attitudes, no difference whatsoever is to be found between smokers and nonsmokers, as the two groups are equally likely to favor smaller government and describe their taxes as too high.

Disagreement between smokers and nonsmokers over issues such as cigarette taxes and smoking restrictions cannot be attributed to differences in political orientation. What about the demographic correlates of cigarette smoking? It is conceivable that observed differences in policy preferences between smokers and nonsmokers are merely a spurious reflection of gender or social class. Again, the data speak against this hypothesis. Whereas smoking was at one time the province of men, the California sample shows no relationship between gender and cigarette use. Class-related variables, income and education, show that nonsmokers have somewhat more affluent backgrounds, but one would hardly conclude from these data that there is a "class basis" to cigarette smoking (Berger, 1986; Savarese and Shughart, 1986). As it happens, income and education bear no relationship to preferences concerning smoking restrictions. And as we shall see below, affluence is unrelated to attitudes toward cigarette taxes among nonsmokers, who are unaffected by the tax.

---

[3] For the sake of brevity we compare the backgrounds of smokers and nonsmokers using data from the more recent of the two California Polls analyzed in this paper. The data from the 1984 survey, however, yield identical results.

Table 1. Demographic and Political Correlates of Cigarette Smoking Among Californians, 1987

	Smokers	Nonsmokers
Size of government		
Smaller/provides fewer services	50.2%	50.1%
Larger/provides more services	40.8	40.7
No opinion	9.0	9.2
State and local tax burden		
Too high	23.5	20.9
Somewhat high	32.9	33.8
About right	38.8	42.4
Other/no opinion	4.7	2.9
Party identification		
Republican	31.8	35.7
Democrat	34.1	34.3
Independent	27.5	24.4
No preference/other	6.7	5.6
Liberalism/conservatism		
Conservative	26.3	35.0
Liberal	14.1	16.0
Middle of the road	30.2	29.1
Don't think in these terms	28.2	19.2
No opinion/don't know	1.2	0.8
Gender		
Male	51.0	50.1
Female	49.0	49.9
Income		
Less than $20,000	31.4	25.1
Between $20,000 and $40,000	35.5	35.1
Over $40,000	34.1	39.8
Education		
No high school diploma	9.8	9.2
High school graduate	35.7	21.1
Some college	34.2	34.6
College graduate	20.4	35.1

SOURCE: Field, 1987.
NOTE: Number of cases = 1,012.

It seems clear, therefore, that conflicting views of smokers and nonsmokers toward policies affecting cigarette use may be attributed neither to general political outlook nor demography. Thus, the methodological problems attendant to the comparison of broad social categories, which so often haunt the self-interest literature, are somewhat muted here. In the sections which follow, we compare the views of smokers and nonsmokers with the presumption that observed differences of opinion indeed reflect the operation of instrumental motives.

Smoking Restrictions

A California Poll conducted in February 1984 asked respondents whether smoking should be banned, restricted to special areas, or allowed without restriction in buses, restaurants, planes, workplaces, and hotels.[4] These five measures were summed together in order to create an index ranging from zero to ten. The reliability of this additive index as measured by Cronbach's alpha is .731, above conventionally acceptable levels (McKennell, 1970).

Intuition suggests that the more one smokes, the more one is inconvenienced by restrictions against smoking in public places. Conversely, the principal beneficiaries of smoking curbs are those most sensitive to cigarette smoke. Accordingly, the survey includes two measures of smoking and nonsmoking "interests." The first is the respondent's self-reported cigarette consumption, ranging from "heavy" to "none." This measure further differentiates between those nonsmokers who quit smoking and nonsmokers who never smoked in the past. The second measure taps the extent to which the respondent is "bothered" when in the company of someone smoking a cigarette. Not surprisingly, these two measures are highly correlated (r = .69), as smokers seldom find cigarette smoke irksome.

Tables 2 and 3 show how smoking habits and sensitivity to smoke influence attitudes toward smoking restrictions. For ease of presentation, we have collapsed the index into three categories, "less restrictive," "more restrictive," and "no change." Table 2 shows clearly that opposition to smoking restrictions declines steadily as one moves

---

[4] Both Field Polls 8401 and 8701 were conducted over the telephone by professional interviewers. Telephone numbers were randomly generated by computer in proportion to local prefix allocation density. Interviews spanned a nine day period. Surveys were conducted during late afternoons and evenings on weekdays and all day Saturday and Sunday. When respondents were not contacted initially, four call-backs were attempted before the case was discarded. The response rate for the two samples was approximately 50%. See the Appendix for question wording and the distribution of responses for each item.

Table 2. Smoking Habits and Support for Smoking Restrictions

	Heavy Smoker	Moderate Smoker	Light Smoker	Former Smoker	Never Smoked
Less restrictive	61.5%	47.7%	32.1%	18.7%	13.9%
No change	17.9	27.3	30.4	23.7	27.5
More restrictive	20.5	25.0	37.4	57.6	58.6
N	39	88	56	257	280

Source: Field, 1984.

Notes: "Less restrictive" includes scores of 0 to 4 on the 11-point index; "more restrictive" includes scores of 6 to 10; "no change" includes scores of 5.

from the heavy smoker column to the nonsmoker column. The opposite is true of support for greater restrictions: three-fifths of the nonsmokers favor more stringent limitations, as compared to one-fifth of all heavy smokers. Particularly interesting is the fact that the attitudes of ex-smokers closely resemble the attitudes of nonsmokers. While it is always hazardous to infer time-series effects from cross-sectional data, the results are certainly consistent with the hypothesis that a change in smoking habits produces a change in policy preference.[5]

Table 3 shows that smoking restrictions are particularly appealing to those sensitive to cigarette smoke. Among people who report that cigarette smoke bothers them "a great deal," 71.3% prefer tightening restrictions, and only 7.8% support a less restrictive policy. By contrast, a majority of those unaffected by cigarette smoke side against smoking restrictions.[6]

What happens when we incorporate both smoking habits and the degree to which respondents are bothered by cigarette smoke? The result is an increase in the polarization of policy attitudes. Heavy

---

[5] With cross-sectional data one cannot rule out the possibility that the causal sequence runs in the opposite direction. It may be that negative attitudes toward smoking caused ex-smokers both to quit and to favor smoking restrictions.

[6] A potential criticism of these findings is that negative attitudes about smoking determine both whether one smokes and how one reacts to smoking restrictions, rendering the apparent self-interest relationship between smoking habits and policy preferences spurious. This interpretation is not supported by the data, however. When one controls for perceptions about the health hazards of smoking—presumably the key attitudinal variable affecting smoking habits—one finds that cigarette consumption continues to have a decisive influence on policy preferences. Among those who believe cigarettes to be "very hazardous" to the smoker's health, for example, the proportion favoring fewer smoking restrictions is 55% among heavy smokers, 38% among moderate smokers, 27% among light smokers, 15% among former smokers, and 13% among those who have never smoked.

Table 3. Sensitivity to Cigarette Smoke and Support for Smoking Restrictions

	Smoke Bothers the Respondent . . .			
	A Great Deal	Somewhat	A Little	Not at All
Less restrictive	7.8%	13.6%	31.1%	54.5%
No change	20.9	31.8	26.2	25.7
More restrictive	71.3	54.5	42.7	19.8
N	282	176	103	167

SOURCE: Field, 1984.

NOTES: "Less restrictive" includes scores of 0 to 4 on the 11-point index; "more restrictive" includes scores of 6 to 10; "no change" includes scores of 5.

smokers unaffected by cigarette fumes and smoke-sensitive nonsmokers view restrictions quite differently: while 66% of heavy smokers have scores less than 5 (on an index ranging from 0 to 10) and thus favor a general loosening of restrictions, only 6% of nonsmokers concur. Among nonsmokers bothered by cigarettes, 70% would like to see more stringent restrictions, a view shared by just 15% of the smokers. Indeed, 47% of the nonsmokers and *none* of the heavy smokers score 7 or higher on the index.

Cigarette Taxes

A second California Poll conducted in April 1987 asked respondents whether they would support or oppose an increase in cigarette taxes in the event that "taxes had to be raised." The amount of the increase varied randomly. One fourth of the sample was asked whether cigarette taxes should be raised from the current ten cent surcharge to fifteen cents. The other quarters of the sample were questioned about ten-cent, fifteen-cent, and twenty-cent tax increases, respectively.

The incidence of cigarette taxation depends, obviously, on the quantity of cigarettes consumed. Unfortunately, the 1987 survey asks respondents only whether they smoke and fails to assess the extent of their cigarette consumption. Consequently, there is a good deal of imprecision in our tax incidence measure, as the category "smokers" includes a substantial number self-described "light" smokers (see Table 2) who are relatively unscathed by cigarette taxes.[7]

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[7] Also problematic is the fact that this survey (as well as the 1984 survey discussed above) contains no information about family members' cigarette consumption.

Notwithstanding the shortcomings of the measures, the findings are quite striking. Again we find smokers and nonsmokers in marked disagreement over policies concerning cigarettes. As shown in Table 4, a decisive majority of nonsmokers support a tax increase, as compared to 25%–50% of the smokers. More interesting is the way the pattern of support changes across experimental subgroups. As the size of the tax proposal grows, smokers become noticeably less enthusiastic about footing the bill to relieve a fiscal crisis. At the same time, nonsmokers support the idea of higher cigarette taxes with little regard for the level of increase. Thus, whereas 87.2% of the smokers and 50.0% of the nonsmokers support a five-cent tax hike, the twenty-cent tax increase is greeted with approval from 82.7% of the nonsmokers and just 27.6% of the smokers.[8]

One interpretation of the fact that nonsmokers are unresponsive to the size of proposed cigarette tax increases is that this type of levy imposes no costs upon them. To test this hypothesis, we examined the relationship between income and preferences among smokers and nonsmokers. Presumably, income should have no relationship to support for a tax hike among nonsmokers, as the tax incidence is roughly zero for all the members of this group. On the other hand, income should be related to support for this regressive tax among smokers. Indeed, Table 5 shows that the relationship between income and support for higher cigarette taxes is trivial for nonsmokers and consistently strong for smokers. Thus, as one would predict on the basis of self-interest, the issue of cigarette taxes pits nonsmokers against smokers and draws particularly strong opposition from low-income smokers.

Self-Interest and Smoking Issues

It seems clear that the fundamental hypothesis underlying the self-interest literature, namely, that people are responsive to the costs and

---

[8] A more rigorous demonstration of how cigarette taxes polarize smokers and nonsmokers shows that the interaction between the tax increase and smoking is statistically significant. Using probit, we regressed support for a tax increase on (1) a dummy variable coded one if the respondent is a nonsmoker, (2) the amount of the proposed increase (logged and then rescaled so that the five-cent increase is set at zero), and (3) an interaction term. The estimated slope of the smoking variable is 1.052 ($p < .05$), which indicates that even at the smallest proposed increase the gap between smokers and nonsmokers is large. The b_2 and b_3 coefficients suggest that the amount of the tax increase has a strong and statistically significant effect on the attitudes of smokers ($-.492$, $p < .05$), but only a weak effect on nonsmokers ($-.164$, $p > .10$). Alternatively, the interaction term (.328, $p < .10$) may be interpreted to mean that policy disagreement between smokers and nonsmokers grows with the size of the proposed tax hike.

Table 4. Support for Cigarette Tax Increase Among Smokers and Nonsmokers, by Size of Increase

	Favor Tax Increase	
Amount of Tax Increase	Smokers	Nonsmokers
Five cents	50.0% (68)	87.2% (179)
Ten cents	41.7 (60)	85.1 (181)
Fifteen cents	25.0 (60)	81.1 (180)
Twenty cents	27.6 (58)	82.7 (191)

Source: Field, 1987.
Note: Numbers in parentheses are base *N*s for the adjacent percentages.

Table 5. Relationship Between Family Income and Support for Cigarette Tax Increases, Among Smokers and Nonsmokers (Gamma coefficients)

Amount of Tax Increase	Smokers	Nonsmokers
Five cents	.44	.01
Ten cents	.35	.06
Fifteen cents	.32	.03
Twenty cents	.32	.07

Source: Field, 1987.

benefits associated with their "interests," is supported by these data. Smokers and nonsmokers, who ordinarily share similar views on political issues, disagree sharply on matters concerning cigarettes. In the case of smoking restrictions, those bothered by cigarette fumes push for more stringent limitations in opposition to the wishes of smokers, especially heavy smokers. Similarly, smokers and nonsmokers look upon cigarette taxes very differently. Nonsmokers express considerable enthusiasm for cigarette taxes as a means of filling depleted state coffers. Smokers, on the other hand, are lukewarm about small tax increases and quite unreceptive to large ones.

Why does "self-interest," which ordinarily exerts little influence on policy preferences, have such a strong effect on attitudes concerning cigarette consumption? What is distinctive about the smoking issue and the interests associated with it?[9]

One explanation is that issues such as smoking restrictions and cigarette taxes involve unusually clear and salient stakes for the respondent.[10] Several studies have suggested that self-interest exerts a greater influence on public opinion when the costs and benefits of a given proposal are unambiguous and fixed prominently in the mind of the respondent. Question wording experiments reported by Green (1988) indicate that when the incidence of a tax increase is ambiguous or obscure, preferences concerning the tax are unrelated to costs; but when stated clearly, the price of the tax increase has a decisive influence on preferences. With regard to salience, question ordering experiments reported by Sears and Lau (1983) show that when respondents are reminded about their "interests" immediately before considering general policy issues, their political preferences become more closely linked to self-interest. The role of clarity and salience is also apparent from quasi-experimental data. Proposition 13, a measure which promised property owners clear and highly publicized tax relief, elicited preferences that were strongly related to home ownership (Sears and Citrin, 1982), in contrast to opinions about more ambiguous or obscure property tax proposals (Beck and Dye, 1982; Lowery and Sigelman, 1981).

There is good reason to suppose that in our data the stakes associated with smoking restrictions and cigarette taxation are both clear and salient. In the first place, the policy items followed questions likely to stimulate the respondent to think about how his own personal comfort might be affected. In the 1984 California Poll, respondents were asked about their smoking habits and their sensitivity to smoke before being asked about smoking restrictions. In the 1987 survey, questions about cigarette use were asked after the cigarette tax items, but the taxation questions followed three questions about smoking restrictions and one item about sensitivity to smoke. Thus, in both instances respondents were reminded about how cigarette consumption affects their personal comfort before they answered the policy questions.

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[9] By phrasing the question in this way, we are implicitly suggesting that methodology alone cannot account for the difference between earlier findings and those presented here. Clearly, the statistical methods used in this paper are too rudimentary to produce a discrepancy. Similarly, the independent variables used here, particularly in the case of cigarette taxes, are not unusually effective measures of self-interest, and as we point out below, most any measure of cigarette consumption produces similar results. The self-interest literature has often been criticized for sloppy measurement. Regrettably, the items used as predictors in the present study do not distinguish us in this regard.

[10] The distinction between clarity and salience may be illustrated in the following way. One may be presented with a choice between two sums of money, both of which are described with long algebraic expressions. In this case, the instrumental features of this choice are salient, but the alternatives involve ambiguous costs and benefits. Conversely, one may face a policy choice which has clear effects on one's pocketbook, but not realize it. Here, the costs and benefits are unambiguous, yet low in salience.

Yet even in the absence of cues that might stimulate respondents to consider their own well-being, smoking restrictions and cigarette taxes tend to elicit a "self-interested" response. In contrast to the Field Polls reported here, a Gallup Poll conducted in March 1987 did not ask about smoking habits prior to assessing the respondents' policy preferences, yet it found that 69% of the nation's nonsmokers and 25% of the smokers favored "a complete ban on smoking in public places." Along similar lines, a 1977 Gallup Poll found that 88% of those smoking more than one pack of cigarettes per day opposed increasing state and federal cigarette taxes, as compared to 35% of the nonsmokers. Evidently, smokers and nonsmokers need not be reminded of how such policies affect them.

One must be cautious, however, when asserting that the relationship between interests and preferences hinges on the clarity and salience of costs and benefits. Certain proposals that involve clear and salient stakes fail to produce divergent preferences because they involve claims not viewed as legitimate. Consider a proposal to guarantee everyone a minimum income. This idea is in many ways antithetical to the "liberal tradition" in America (Hartz, 1955) and, not surprisingly, meets with little support from either rich or poor (McClosky and Zaller, 1984), despite the clarity of its appeal to the latter group.

In the case of smoking restrictions, it is quite possible that although nonsmokers have always found cigarette fumes irritating, their claim to a smoke-free environment has gained legitimacy only in recent years. Accordingly, the divergence in attitudes we observe between smokers and nonsmokers may be a time-bound phenomenon. Unfortunately, most policy attitudes concerning cigarette taxes and smoking restrictions cannot be traced far back in time (Erskine, 1966). The only question available for a longitudinal comparison is the Gallup item proposing a complete ban on cigarette advertisement, but the trend in opinion is suggestive. In 1977, 41% of the nation's nonsmokers favored an advertising ban, as compared to 28% of the smokers. By 1981, the proportion of nonsmokers favoring a ban increased to 53% and reached 57% by 1987. On the other hand, the opinions of smokers remained inert: 27% favored the proposal in 1981; 30% did so in 1987. The gap between smokers and nonsmokers on this issue, therefore, widened considerably over the past decade, primarily due to the increased militancy of nonsmokers.

Conclusion

The contrast between the findings presented here and those of the self-interest literature reflects both the nature of the smoking issue and recent patterns of attitude change. Unlike proposals such as national health insurance, which appeal to the privately insured as well as the medically indigent, there is little to attract nonsmokers to a tolerant position on cigarettes. And unlike issues such as whether government should guarantee each citizen a job and a good standard of living, smoking restrictions and cigarette taxes do not encourage the respondent to ponder weighty questions concerning the state's social role. Whereas partisan affiliation and liberal or conservative self-designation generally exert a strong influence on policy attitudes, neither variable bears any statistical relationship to attitudes concerning cigarettes. With self-interest unobstructed by competing considerations, the clash between smokers and nonsmokers comes to the fore.

This polarization is enhanced by the pattern of change in public policy and elite discourse. Public officials and medical experts are vocal and fairly unified in their denunciation of smoking, and where smoking restrictions in restaurants might have once been thought absurd, they are now commonplace. The consequences of the ubiquitous antismoking message are twofold. On the one hand, some smokers are persuaded to quit, leaving behind a "hard core" of incorrigibles. At the same time, nonsmokers are encouraged to oppose smoking. Thus, the evolution of the smoking issue has sustained and perhaps widened the gap between smokers and nonsmokers.

The direction of public policy and the content of elite discourse seldom proceed in such an orderly fashion. Enduring issues such as health policy or public works divide elites along partisan and ideological lines, and there are no apolitical experts to mobilize public opinion. Thus, members of the mass public receive messages which may be incongruent with their interests. Because material interests are rarely as clear and salient as those associated with smoking restrictions and cigarette taxes, incongruent policy arguments are seldom resisted with the smoker's tenacity. As a result, the linkage between interests and political attitudes often unravels.

Appendix

CALIFORNIA POLL, 1–9 FEBRUARY 1984

Next I am going to read you a number of different public places. For each one I read I would like you to tell me whether you think there should be no restrictions placed on smoking in these places, a special area set aside for smokers, or whether smoking should not be allowed at all in these places.

Should there be no restrictions on smoking, a special area set aside for smokers, or should smoking not be allowed in restaurants?

N of Cases	*Value*	*Value Label*
51	1	No restrictions
574	2	Special areas
115	3	Not allowed
3	8	No opinion

Should there be no restrictions on smoking, a special area set aside for smokers, or should smoking not be allowed in work places?

N of Cases	*Value*	*Value Label*
92	1	No restrictions
517	2	Special areas
121	3	Not allowed
13	8	No opinion

Should there be no restrictions on smoking, a special area set aside for smokers, or should smoking not be allowed on buses and trains?

N of Cases	*Value*	*Value Label*
24	1	No restrictions
371	2	Special areas
341	3	Not allowed
6	8	No opinion

Should there be no restrictions on smoking, a special area set aside for smokers, or should smoking not be allowed on airplanes?

N of Cases	*Value*	*Value Label*
20	1	No restrictions
437	2	Special areas
283	3	Not allowed
3	8	No opinion

Should there be no restrictions on smoking, a special area set aside for smokers, or should smoking not be allowed in hotels and motels?

N of Cases	*Value*	*Value Label*
242	1	No restrictions
433	2	Special areas
54	3	Not allowed
14	8	No opinion

CALIFORNIA POLL, 3–10 APRIL 1987

Currently California's tax on cigarettes is 10 cents per pack. It has been proposed that this tax be increased to 15 cents per pack. If the state needed additional money and taxes had to be raised, would you favor or oppose increasing the cigarette tax to 15 cents per pack?

N of Cases	*Value*	*Value Label*
194	1	Favor
58	2	Oppose
7	8	No opinion

Currently California's tax on cigarettes is 10 cents per pack. It has been proposed that this tax be increased to 20 cents per pack. If the state needed additional money and taxes had to be raised, would you favor or oppose increasing the cigarette tax to 20 cents per pack?

N of Cases	*Value*	*Value Label*
179	1	Favor
63	2	Oppose
14	8	No opinion

Currently California's tax on cigarettes is 10 cents per pack. It has been proposed that this tax be increased to 25 cents per pack. If the state needed additional money and taxes had to be raised, would you favor or oppose increasing the cigarette tax to 25 cents per pack?

N of Cases	*Value*	*Value Label*
164	1	Favor
79	2	Oppose
5	8	No opinion

Currently California's tax on cigarettes is 10 cents per pack. It has been proposed that this tax be increased to 30 cents per pack. If the state needed additional money and taxes had to be raised, would you favor or oppose increasing the cigarette tax to 30 cents per pack?

N of Cases	*Value*	*Value Label*
177	1	Favor
77	2	Oppose
9	8	No opinion

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ECONOMIC NEWS ON TELEVISION
THE DETERMINANTS OF COVERAGE

DAVID E. HARRINGTON

Abstract This paper examines the television networks' coverage of the unemployment rate, the inflation rate as measured by the Consumer Price Index, and the growth rate of real GNP over the twelve years from 1973 through 1984. This time period includes two major recessions, two severe bursts of inflation, and three presidential elections. A common complaint is that the networks overemphasize bad economic news. Using two measures of coverage, this paper examines whether the television networks give greater coverage to these statistics when they are deteriorating. The empirical results reveal that the networks do give greater coverage to bad economic news during nonelection years, but this pattern disappears during election years. The empirical results also reveal that presidential comments are very powerful in shaping the amount of coverage given to these economic statistics.

There is strong evidence that television news plays a powerful role in shaping public opinion (Kinder and Iyengar, 1987). This influence, however, may or may not be desirable. According to Kinder and Iyengar, this depends on the "thorny question" of "how faithfully the pictures and stories that appear on the news each night portray what of real consequence is actually happening in the world" (1987:122). The networks' coverage of the economy presents a wonderful opportunity to investigate this question for two reasons.

First, there is a common perception among some critics that the networks' coverage of the economy distorts reality. These critics complain that the networks overemphasize bad economic news. For example, economist Herbert Stein—a former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors—believes that "the press communicates an exces-

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sively dramatic, anxious and negative view of the economy" (Stein, 1975:40). Similarly, President Reagan complained during the 1982–83 recession that the constantly "downbeat" coverage of the economy was inhibiting the recovery (Washington Post, 1982). In response, CBS anchorman Dan Rather argues that these criticisms are attempts to "convince the public that problems are not problems" (Associated Press, 1983). In other words, he believes that these critics are blaming the messengers for bad economic news.

Second, the actual performance of the economy is continuously measured by several economic statistics. As a result, it is possible to examine how the coverage of the economy depends on the actual performance of the economy. This paper uses the networks' coverage of the unemployment rate, the inflation rate as measured by the Consumer Price Index, and the growth rate of real GNP over the twelve years from 1973 through 1984 to test whether the television networks give greater coverage to these statistics when they are deteriorating, holding other factors constant. The paper also examines how the coverage changes during election years and whether the president can influence the amount of coverage by commenting on the statistics.

Previous Studies

Several critics of the media use a study by the Institute for Applied Economics (1984) as evidence that the networks are biased toward bad economic news (Washington Post, 1984; Ben Wattenberg, 1984; Paul Weaver, 1984). The Institute examined the content of the three major network news programs over the six month period from 1 July to 31 December 1983. During this period, the economy was beginning its recovery from the 1982–83 recession. The Institute found that while nearly 95% of the economic statistics were positive, 85% of the in-depth stories were primarily negative.

In his summary of the report, Holmes Brown (1984) uses the CBS coverage of the June 1983 unemployment rate as a typical example of the network's coverage of the economy. Since the unemployment rate decreased in June, Brown characterizes this statistic as good news. Nevertheless, "the entire emphasis of the report was on those who remained out of work—not on those who were returning to work" (1984:19). As a result, Brown uses this as an example of a primarily negative report accompanying the release of a positive economic statistic.

The unemployment rate in June was 10.0%—down from 10.1% in May. It is certainly debatable whether CBS was being excessively negative in focusing its report on the high level of unemployment rather than the small change. In the Institute report, this ambiguity disappears because an economic statistic is defined as positive or negative based only on the direction of the change in the statistic. This assumption implies that the level of unemployment should not influence the coverage of the unemployment rate.

In contrast, the practice of "pegging" stories to news events and the desire of network journalists to "present both sides of the story" imply that network journalists view the release of the unemployment rate as an appropriate time to discuss both the level of and the change in the unemployment rate.[1] For example, suppose a network has developed a report on the level of unemployment and its impact on individuals in the rust belt. This report might then be held until it could be pegged to some news event such as the release of the unemployment rate. Also, reports on a decrease in the unemployment rate will often describe the plight of those still unemployed in an attempt to "present both sides of the story." As a result, network journalists believe that the coverage of the unemployment rate should reflect both the level and the change in the statistic.

Behr and Iyengar examine CBS's coverage of the economy and conclude that its "news coverage is indeed not limited to 'bad news'; decreases in unemployment are as newsworthy as increases" (1985: 46). More specifically, they estimate how the network's coverage of the economy responded to changes in the condition of the economy over the years from 1974 through 1980. As dependent variables for the coverage of unemployment, they use the total number of reports on unemployment during a two-month period and the number of times it was the lead story. Their independent variables include the unemployment rate for that period and the absolute value of the change in the unemployment rate from the previous period. However, they do not include a dummy variable which indicates the direction of the change in the unemployment rate. As a result, they incorrectly infer from their empirical results that "decreases in unemployment are as newsworthy as increases" (1985:46). Without the dummy variable, their empirical results simply do not address this question.[2]

Behr and Iyengar also argue that they cannot test for whether the coverage of inflation was limited to bad news "because there were no periods of deflation over the seven years we examined" (1985:46). It is very rare for economies to experience deflation, i.e., an actual decrease in the level of prices. In the 1970s, improvements in inflation occurred when the rate of inflation decreased. As a result, Behr and Iyengar could have used their data to test whether CBS gave greater coverage to inflation when the inflation rate was increasing. Unfortunately, their results for the coverage of inflation are unable to answer this question.[3]

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[1] These practices are discussed in more detail by Gans (1979), Tuchman (1972), and Wood (1985). Wood also summarizes several other criticisms made by economists of the media's coverage of economic news.

[2] An anonymous referee reports that Behr and Iyengar "did in fact look for directional differences in the effects of changes in the unemployment rate and found none."

In this paper, I ask the following question: If we accept that the release of an economic statistic is an appropriate time to discuss both the level of and the change in the statistic, do the networks give greater coverage to the statistic when it is deteriorating?

The Model

When the unemployment rate is released on the first Friday of the month, the networks have to decide how much coverage it deserves on that night's newscast. In other words, they have to decide on the length of the report and whether to make it the lead story. In general, important stories are given more time and are more likely to lead the news programs (Gans, 1979).

This paper presents the results from estimating two equations which describe the coverage by the network news programs of three economic statistics: the unemployment rate, the inflation rate as measured by the CPI, and the growth rate of real GNP. The dependent variable of the first equation is the number of seconds of coverage given to the economic statistic (TIME). The independent variables are the absolute value of the change in the economic statistic (CHG), the level of the statistic (LEVEL), a dummy variable for whether the statistic is deteriorating (BAD), the length of the other major story of the day (RIVAL), a dummy variable for whether the president commented on the economic statistic (COMMENT), dummy variables for whether it is a presidential or an off-year congressional election year (PRES, CONG), and a full set of interaction terms between PRES, CONG, and the other independent variables (P*CHG, P*LEVEL, P*BAD, P*RIVAL, P*COMMENT, C*CHG, C*LEVEL, C*BAD, C*RIVAL, and C*COMMENT). This equation was estimated using ordinary least squares and is described in the Appendix.

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[3] Behr and Iyengar use a single independent variable to measure the inflation performance of the economy. This variable is the (two-month average) inflation rate as measured by the Consumer Price Index if it is above the (seven-year) average inflation rate; otherwise, it is 0. According to Behr and Iyengar, a positive coefficient on this variable implies that the coverage of inflation "is driven by changing (worsening) national conditions, though here the changes must be unusually severe to warrant additional news coverage" (1985:46). Over the 1970s, there were numerous occasions when the inflation rate was above the (seven-year) average inflation rate but was nevertheless declining. Does this situation really represent a worsening national condition? Once again, this confusion seems to arise because Behr and Iyengar do not appreciate the distinction between deflation and a decline in the inflation rate. In contrast, the equations estimated in this paper use three independent variables to describe the inflation performance of the economy. These variables are the inflation rate (LEVEL), the absolute value of the change in the inflation rate (CHG), and a dummy variable for whether the inflation rate is increasing (BAD). Not surprisingly, when their variable is included in my specifications, it primarily affects the coefficient on LEVEL. In general, their specification does not adequately capture the impact of changes in the inflation rate and the direction of the change on the coverage of inflation.

The second measure of coverage is whether or not the report on the economic statistic leads the evening news program. In this case, the dependent variable (LEAD) equals 1 if the report on the economic statistic leads the evening news program; otherwise, LEAD equals 0. The independent variables are the same as those used in the first equation. Since LEAD is a qualitative dependent variable, the logit model is used to estimate the impact of the independent variables on the probability that a report on one of these statistics will lead an evening newscast. This specification is also described in the Appendix.

The model used to generate the two equations assumes that network journalists decide on the amount of coverage to give the release of an economic statistic by looking at both its level and the change in the statistic. As a result, we would expect the coverage of the unemployment rate, for example, to increase when the level of unemployment is high or when there are large changes in unemployment. If the critics of the networks are correct that the networks emphasize bad economic news, we would also expect that the unemployment rate would receive greater coverage when it was increasing. These hypotheses can be tested using the estimated coefficients on CHG, LEVEL, BAD, and the corresponding interaction terms.

On 2 September 1983 the Bureau of Labor Statistics released the unemployment rate for the previous month. Since the economy was just beginning its recovery from the severe 1982–83 recession, we might have expected the network news programs to devote major stories to unemployment that night. However, none of the three network news programs did more than announce the new unemployment rate statistics. This small amount of coverage is not surprising given the competing (or RIVAL) story that night on the evening news. This rival story, which dominated each of the three broadcasts, concerned the destruction of a South Korean commercial jetliner by Soviet jet fighters during the previous night. Therefore, we expect the coefficient on RIVAL, which is the length of the other major story of the day, to be negative.

The president may influence the amount of coverage given to these statistics by timing speeches to coincide with the release of a favorable statistic or by commenting on the statistic to reporters. There is ample anecdotal evidence that presidents attempt to influence what appears on the evening broadcasts. For example, Robinson and Sheehan quote a political aide of President Carter as saying that their daily campaign staff meeting "consisted virtually of nothing else than deciding what we were going to do that day to get on the evening news" (1983:201). In general, Kinder and Iyengar argue that "presidents in the television age have assiduously sought to control the criteria by which they are viewed and evaluated" (1987:121). Given their evidence on the impact of television coverage on public opinion, Kinder and Iyengar conclude that "presidents would be foolish to do otherwise" (1987:121). In this paper, the impact of presidential comments or speeches on the coverage of these statistics is estimated using a dummy variable for whether the president referred to the economic statistic (COMMENT).

The impact of the independent variables on the coverage of these statistics may change during election years. For example, the previous quote about President Carter's campaign staff suggests that presidents may try harder to influence the coverage of these statistics during presidential election campaigns. However, this does not necessarily imply that they are better able to influence the coverage. This depends on how the coefficient on COMMENT changes during presidential election years. Also, the behavior of network reporters, editors, and producers may change during election years. For example, Robinson and Sheehan believe that "campaign news produces the most objective reporting that [the] national press ever provides" (1983:62). This suggests that reporters may be less likely to emphasize bad economic news during election years, if indeed they ever do. In other words, the coefficient on BAD may change during election years. More generally, the coefficients of the model may change as these economic statistics take on more political significance during election years. The model presented in this paper allows the coverage of these statistics to differ in presidential election years, off-year congressional election years, and nonelection years. Also, the interaction terms allow a formal test of whether the coefficients change during presidential and off-year congressional election years. This is explained in the Appendix.

One of the primary advantages of this model is that it focuses on the actual decisions that the networks must make on the day that, for instance, the unemployment rate is released (see Westin, 1982:54). The model could have used different dependent variables such as the total number of reports on unemployment in the month that the unemployment rate was released, the total length of these reports, or the number of times these reports lead the evening newscasts. However, these variables do not correspond to actual decisions made by network journalists on the day that the unemployment rate is released. As a result, the model used in this paper better captures the process of network decision making. If this is true, we would expect our results to extend to these other dependent variables. Indeed, we might even expect our results to be reflected in the tone and content of stories. Naturally, it would be interesting to test these hypotheses using alternative dependent variables.[4]

Data Description

Television News Index and Abstracts provides information on the total number of seconds devoted to the coverage of economic statistics (TIME) and whether the reports were lead stories (LEAD). For each of the three major network news programs, this information was collected for their reports on the release of the unemployment rate, the Consumer Price Index, and the Gross National Product over the twelve years from 1973 through 1984. The monthly coverage of the unemployment rate and the Consumer Price Index provide samples containing 428 and 431 observations, respectively. The coverage of the preliminary estimate of each quarter's Gross National Product provides a smaller sample of 143 observations.[5]

The model used in this study assumes that journalists decide on the amount of coverage to give economic statistics by looking at the level of the statistic (LEVEL) and the magnitude of the change (CHG). For unemployment, the level is the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for all civilian workers. The change is the difference between the current and previous month's unemployment rate. For GNP, the level is the preliminary estimate of the most recent quarter's growth rate calculated on an annual basis. The change is the difference between the preliminary estimate of the most recent quarter and the revised estimate of the previous quarter.[6]

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[4] There are several other advantages associated with the decision to limit the analysis to the coverage of these economic statistics. First, the results are easily replicable since it is very clear when a report concerns one of these statistics. Second, the decision to limit the analysis to the coverage of these economic statistics allowed the collection of more data along a different dimension. While Behr and Iyengar collected information on only CBS over seven years, this study collected information on all three networks over twelve years. As a result, the sample used in this paper can be used to formally test whether the three networks provide similar coverage of the economy. In particular, the coverage of the unemployment rate and the Consumer Price Index in nonelection years provide two samples which are large enough to formally test this hypothesis. In this case, the independent variables of the model are CHG, LEVEL, BAD, RIVAL, COMMENT, a dummy variable for NBC, a dummy variable for ABC, and a full set of interaction terms between the network dummy variables and the other independent variables. In each of the four equations (two statistics and two measures of coverage), the entire set of network variables are statistically insignificant at the 10% level. This is strong evidence that the coverage of the economy is very similar across the three networks. It also explains why network variables do not appear in any of the equations estimated in this paper.

[5] The potential number of observations for the coverage of both the unemployment rate and the CPI is 432, i.e., 12 years × 12 months × 3 networks. The final sample for the unemployment rate lost two observations due to the preemption of news programs due to sports events, one observation due to a tape malfunction at Vanderbilt University, and one observation because it was unclear whether the unemployment rate was the focus of the report on the economy. The final sample for the CPI lost one observation due to a tape failure. The potential number of observations for the coverage of GNP is 144. The final sample lost one observation because it was unclear whether GNP was the focus of the report on the economy.

The monthly inflation rates were calculated using the all-items Consumer Price Index for urban wage earners and clerical workers and were measured at annual rates. The model was first estimated using the current monthly inflation rate and the change from the previous month. Since monthly inflation rates, IR_t, are very volatile, the model was also estimated using variables based on different definitions of the level of inflation. These new definitions assume that the volatility of the monthly inflation rate causes journalists to implicitly use the average monthly rate in the recent past as an estimate of the level of inflation. Indeed, the fit of the OLS regression improved substantially when the level of inflation, LEVEL_t, was defined as the mean inflation rate over the last three months, and the change in inflation was defined as the difference between the current month's inflation rate and the level in the previous month, i.e., $\text{IR}_t - \text{LEVEL}_{t-1}$. As a result, the empirical results presented in this paper are based on these latter definitions. However, the general conclusions drawn from the empirical results do not hinge on these definitions. The only systematic difference is that the change in inflation becomes more important in explaining the coverage of the inflation rate.[7]

For each economic statistic, CHG is the absolute value of the change in the statistic. BAD is a dummy variable that equals 1 if the change is negative for the growth rate of real GNP and positive for the inflation and unemployment rates. And finally, NOCHG is a dummy variable that equals 1 if there was no change in the statistic.[8]

The variable RIVAL is the length of the major competing story on the network news program on the day that the statistic was released. If the report on the statistic did not lead the evening news program, RIVAL is the length of the lead story. Otherwise, RIVAL is the length of the report which followed the first commercial.[9] Finally, RIVAL is measured in minutes (to the second decimal place), which makes the regression coefficients easier to interpret.

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[6] These growth rates are the best estimates available at the time that network journalists decide on the amount of coverage to give preliminary estimates of GNP.

[7] These definitions also conform more closely to how I would interpret the information provided by the monthly inflation rate. More specifically, if you asked me to interpret what the current month's inflation rate might imply about the future course of inflation, I would compare it with some estimate of the previous level of inflation. I would not compare it with last month's inflation rate. I also suspected that the estimates of the coverage of the growth rate of real GNP would improve if similar variables were used. However, the fit of the OLS regression did not improve when similar variables were used. As a result, I decided to present the estimates based on the simplest specification for the coverage of GNP.

[8] Due to the volatility of the monthly inflation rate and the growth rate of real GNP, NOCHG is never equal to 1 for either of these statistics.

COMMENT is a dummy variable for whether the president made a comment on the economic statistic. Since this variable was constructed using information from *Television News Index and Abstracts*, it may omit some occasions when the president made a comment and all three networks decided to ignore it. However, this seems very unlikely given that there were very few occasions when one of the three networks did not quote the president and the others did. It appears that if a quote from the president is available, all three networks use it.

The variable PRES is a dummy variable that equals 1 if the report aired during a presidential election year, i.e., January through the day prior to the presidential election. Similarly, the variable CONG is a dummy variable that equals 1 if the report aired prior to an off-year congressional election. Finally, the remaining independent variables are interactive terms that are the product of PRES, CONG, and the other independent variables. Descriptive statistics for the variables which are not interaction terms are presented in Table 1.

Empirical Results

Over the years of the sample, there were two major recessions, two severe bursts of inflation, and three presidential elections. The means of the economic statistics (see Table 1) reflect the turbulence in the economy. More specifically, the mean growth rate of real GNP over the years from 1973 through 1984 was slower than the previous decade. Also, the economy experienced high mean levels of unemployment, 7.3%, and inflation, 7.6%. There were also large deviations around these means. In particular, the unemployment rate ranged from a low of 5.0% to a high of 10.8% over these twelve years. Also, the (three-month average) inflation rate varied from a low of 1.3% to a high of 17.0%.

As a result, the performance of the economy was a major news story over the years of the sample. For example, reports based on the release of the monthly unemployment rate were, on average, 2 minutes and 29

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[9] There are other possible ways to define RIVAL when the economic statistic is the focus of the lead report. One alternative is to use the length of the second report of the day. However, the networks often tuck a short report between the lead story and the first commercial. Alternatively, RIVAL could have been defined as the second longest report of the day. However, this definition would have included some reports that were only loosely tied to the news events of the day.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	Unemployment Rate	Consumer Price Index	Growth Rate of Real GNP
Dependent variables			
TIME (seconds)	148.96	127.82	94.90
	(124.49)	(94.15)	(72.20)
LEAD (%)	34.58	30.39	18.88
	(47.62)	(46.05)	(39.27)
Independent variables			
CHG	0.21	2.74	4.21
	(0.19)	(2.44)	(3.13)
LEVEL	7.25	7.57	1.53
	(1.55)	(3.63)	(5.00)
BAD	0.40	0.48	0.52
	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.50)
NOCHG	0.18	—[a]	—[a]
	(0.39)		
RIVAL	3.83	4.44	4.63
	(2.37)	(3.05)	(2.84)
COMMENT	0.15	0.08	0.06
	(0.36)	(0.28)	(0.24)
Sample size (N)	428	431	143

NOTE: Sample standard deviations are shown in parentheses.

[a] Due to the volatility of the inflation rate and the growth rate of real GNP, NOCHG is never equal to 1 for either of these statistics.

seconds long (see Table 1). This slightly exceeds the normal length of a "major report," which is "about one minute forty-five seconds to two minutes long" (Westin, 1982:51). Also, 35% of the reports on the unemployment rate led the nightly news programs. There is also a clear pattern in the amount of coverage given to the three statistics. Using both measures of coverage, the unemployment rate received the most coverage and the growth rate of real GNP the least.[10]

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[10] In contrast, Behr and Iyengar (1985) find that the CBS Evening News carried more stories on inflation than unemployment over the years from 1974 through 1980. Using the same network and time period, I find that the reports on the unemployment rate were nevertheless longer and more likely to be lead stories. These seemingly contradictory results may be due to the existence of fewer news pegs for unemployment. For example, the network news programs regularly cover two measures of inflation—the Consumer Price Index and the Wholesale Price Index—and only one measure of unemploy-

Table 1 also reveals that presidents were most likely to comment on the unemployment rate and least likely to comment on the preliminary estimate of GNP. Not surprisingly, presidents were also more likely to comment on these statistics when they were improving. With the exception of comments on the GNP, these comments were also more likely to occur during presidential election years.[11] For example, presidents commented on about half of the occasions when the unemployment rate decreased during a presidential election year. In contrast, there was only one occasion when a president commented on an increase in the unemployment rate which occurred during a presidential election year. Finally, the length of the rival story was, on average, about 4 minutes long.

Table 2 presents the mean coverage of these economic statistics broken down by whether or not they were deteriorating. In nonelection years, the differences are dramatic. In particular, reports about increases in the unemployment rate were, on average, 48% longer and 106% more likely to lead the evening newscasts than reports about decreases in unemployment. For the inflation rate, reports about increases were, on average, 29% longer and 61% more likely to lead the evening newscasts. Finally, reports about decreases in the growth rate of real GNP were 27% longer and 61% more likely to lead the evening newscasts—although this latter difference is not statistically significant. In election years, this pattern very nearly disappears. With two exceptions, these statistics were not given greater coverage when they were deteriorating in election years.

These differences in coverage, however, do not hold other factors constant. For example, the difference in the mean coverage of rising and falling unemployment rates during nonelection years does not hold the magnitude of the change constant. In particular, the increases in the unemployment rate in nonelection years were larger, on average, than the decreases. Since large changes in the unemployment rate are more newsworthy than small changes, the difference in the mean coverage of rising and falling unemployment rates may be attributable to the relative magnitude of the changes rather than their direction.

The regression results for the coverage of these economic statistics during nonelection years are presented in Table 3. The first three columns present the ordinary least squares regression results for the num-

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ment. Therefore, each of these studies reveals something different about the pattern of coverage across the different economic statistics. While Behr and Iyengar report that there are fewer reports on unemployment, this study reveals that these reports are longer, on average, than those on inflation.

[11] Only President Reagan commented on GNP, and these comments mostly occurred during the recovery from the 1982–83 recession.

Table 2. Mean Coverage by Direction of Changes in Economic Statistics

	UR			CPI			GNP		
	TIME	LEAD	*N*	TIME	LEAD	*N*	TIME	LEAD	*N*
Nonelection year									
Deteriorating	185.1	48.3	89	138.5	38.7	111	110.3	21.2	33
	(14.0)	(5.1)		(9.3)	(4.6)		(9.3)	(6.4)	
Improving	125.2	23.4	107	107.6	24.1	141	86.6	13.2	38
	(11.0)	(4.1)		(6.9)	(3.6)		(8.5)	(5.9)	
Difference	59.9**	25.0**		30.9**	14.6**		23.7*	8.1	
	(17.8)	(6.6)		(11.5)	(5.9)		(12.6)	(8.7)	
Presidential election year									
Deteriorating	151.0	40.0	30	154.5	28.6	42	87.1	8.3	24
	(17.5)	(9.1)		(20.5)	(7.1)		(8.3)	(5.3)	
Improving	155.9	53.7	41	93.3	29.2	48	105.8	25.0	12
	(17.1)	(7.9)		(10.4)	(6.6)		(8.1)	(6.7)	
Difference	−4.9	−13.7		61.2**	−0.6		−18.8	−16.7*	
	(24.5)	(12.0)		(23.0)	(9.7)		(13.1)	(8.9)	
Congressional election year									
Deteriorating	190.2	37.0	54	152.1	33.9	56	87.8	33.3	18
	(20.2)	(6.6)		(12.0)	(6.4)		(8.1)	(7.0)	
Improving	139.0	41.4	29	153.3	27.3	33	94.4	22.2	18
	(20.8)	(9.3)		(14.4)	(7.9)		(8.1)	(6.5)	
Difference	51.2*	−4.3		−1.2	6.7		−6.7	11.1	
	(29.0)	(11.4)		(18.7)	(10.1)		(11.4)	(9.6)	

NOTE: Standard errors are shown in parentheses.
* $p < .10$, two-tailed test. ** $p < .05$, two-tailed test.

ber of seconds of coverage. The last three columns present the logit regression results for whether the report was the lead story on the evening news.[12]

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[12] The model was estimated on the entire sample using the full set of interaction terms for presidential and off-year congressional election years. The estimated parameters presented in Tables 3, 4, and 5 are nevertheless the same as those produced by running the regressions using only the basic independent variables (CHG, LEVEL, BAD, NOCHG, RIVAL, and COMMENT) and the relevant subsample. The *t* statistics are different, however, because the estimates of the variances are based on the entire sample. Also, these tables present estimates of logit derivatives rather than logit coefficients. Since the logit specification is a nonlinear function of the independent variables, logit coefficients cannot be given the same interpretation as OLS coefficients. In other words, these estimated coefficients cannot be interpreted as the probability changes associated with a one unit

With one exception, the estimated coefficients on BAD for both sets of regressions are significantly positive. Also, the magnitude of these coefficients imply that bad economic news is given substantially more coverage than good economic news in nonelection years. For example, the length of these reports are longer, on average, if the statistics are deteriorating. In particular, rising unemployment and inflation rates are given, on average, 41 and 23 seconds of additional coverage, respectively. Given the limited amount of time available on the network news programs, the additional coverage represents an increase of 35% and 20%, respectively. Also, declining growth rates receive 38 seconds of additional coverage, which represents a 48% increase.

The reports are also much more likely to be lead stories if the statistics are deteriorating. Evaluated at the means of the other independent variables, the probability that an increase in the unemployment rate will lead a network news program in a nonelection year is 28.7%.[13] This probability for an equally large decrease is only 10.8%.[14] Therefore, a report on the unemployment rate is more than twice as likely to lead an evening news program when the unemployment rate is increasing. Similarly, an increasing inflation rate raises the probability that it will be a lead story from 20.3% to 34.6%. While the estimated coefficient on BAD in the GNP regression is statistically less significant (at only the 25% level), its magnitude is very similar. In this case, a declining growth rate raises the probability that it will be a lead story from 1.9% to 6.5%. Therefore, these regression results strongly support the ear-

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increase in the corresponding independent variable. These logit derivatives were calculated using the estimated coefficients of the logit model and the mean values of the independent variables (the formula for the logit derivative is presented in the Appendix). These derivatives along with the *t* statistic for the hypothesis that the associated logit coefficient equals 0 are presented in Tables 3, 4, and 5. The estimates of the logit coefficients are available from me upon request.

[13] This predicted probability is very different from the corresponding descriptive statistic that 48.3% of the reports on an increasing unemployment rate led the evening newscasts in nonelection years (see Table 2). There are two reasons for this discrepancy. First, the predicted probabilities (and the derivatives presented in Tables 3, 4, and 5) are evaluated at the mean values of the independent variables for the entire sample (see Table 1), not at the mean values for the three subsamples. If we evaluated the probabilities and derivatives at the mean values of the three subsamples, we would not be able to disentangle whether any differences were due to differences in how the networks cover these statistics (i.e., the parameters) or to differences in the performance of the economy (i.e., the values of the independent variables). Second, the logit model is nonlinear. As a result, this predicted probability increases rapidly as the values of the independent variables rise above their mean values.

[14] The logit derivative on the BAD dummy variable in the unemployment regression (0.179 of Table 3) tells us that the probability that the unemployment rate will be the lead story increases by 17.9 percentage points when BAD increases from 0 to 1. This change is equal to the difference between the two predicted probabilities described in the text.

Table 3. Regression Results: Coverage of the Economy During Nonelection Years

	OLS Coefficients for Number of Seconds of Coverage			Logit Derivatives for Lead Story		
	UR	CPI	GNP	UR	CPI	GNP
Intercept	−44.21	91.16**	128.60**	−0.507**	−0.050	0.049
	(−1.26)	(5.31)	(5.62)	(−2.99)	(−0.53)	(1.17)
CHG	189.70**	6.03**	−3.39	0.949**	0.008	−0.004
	(4.83)	(2.73)	(−1.16)	(4.72)	(0.68)	(−0.74)
LEVEL	20.81**	3.64**	−0.36	0.051**	0.007	0.001
	(5.12)	(2.26)	(−0.19)	(2.85)	(0.78)	(0.29)
BAD	41.45**	22.88**	38.04*	0.179**	0.143**	0.045
	(2.80)	(2.08)	(1.80)	(2.81)	(2.43)	(1.22)
NOCHG	58.61**	—[a]	—[a]	0.241**	—[a]	—[a]
	(2.89)			(2.36)		
RIVAL	−10.02**	−5.33**	−7.87**	−0.105**	−0.061**	−0.038**
	(−3.83)	(−3.30)	(−3.00)	(−5.45)	(−4.62)	(−3.35)
COMMENT	75.36**	23.38	39.46	−0.022	−0.224	0.034
	(3.34)	(0.89)	(1.49)	(−0.24)	(−1.39)	(0.80)
Sample size[b]	428	431	143	428	431	143
R^2 [b]	.367	.235	.205			
Log likelihood[b]				−194.03	−217.62	−41.70

NOTE: The t statistic for the hypothesis that the coefficient equals 0 is shown in parentheses.

[a] Due to the volatility of the inflation rate and the growth rate of real GNP, NOCHG is never equal to 1 for either of these statistics.

[b] The sample size, R^2, and log likelihood are for the full model described in the Appendix.

* $p < .10$, two-tailed test. ** $p < .05$, two-tailed test.

lier conclusion that bad economic news receives more coverage than good economic news during nonelection years.[15]

The estimated coefficients on NOCHG imply that an improvement in the unemployment rate also receives less coverage than an unchanging unemployment rate. This may not be as surprising as it seems. An unchanging unemployment rate may indicate that the economy is near a turning point in the business cycle and, as a result, may receive more coverage.

The level of unemployment and the magnitude of the change in the unemployment rate have the expected impact on the amount of coverage given to the unemployment rate. Higher levels of unemployment and larger changes result in reports which are longer and more likely to lead the evening newscasts. There is a surprising asymmetry in the results for the coverage of the CPI. While higher levels of inflation and larger changes result in longer reports, they are not more likely to lead the evening newscasts.[16] The corresponding coefficients are not significant for the coverage of GNP.

The length of the rival story has the expected impact on the amount of coverage given to these economic statistics. However, the magnitudes of the estimated coefficients in the first set of equations are quite small. For example, each additional minute devoted to the rival story is associated, on average, with a decrease of only 5 to 10 seconds in the coverage of these economic statistics. Therefore, major stories may compete less with one another than with the remaining stories for time on the broadcast. However, only one story can lead each night's newscast. In this case, each additional minute devoted to the rival story is associated, on average, with a decrease of from 4 to 11 percentage points in the probability that one of these statistics will lead the evening newscast.

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[15] The networks' coverage of these statistics could have been modeled as a two-step process where networks first decide on whether the reports will be lead stories and then on their length. When LEAD is included as an independent variable in the TIME regressions of this recursive system, the estimated coefficients on BAD in the unemployment and inflation regressions decrease to 21.42 and 9.99 seconds, respectively. This result is not surprising given that the unemployment and inflation rates are more likely to be lead stories when these statistics are deteriorating and that lead stories are, on average, longer. As a result, reports about increases in these statistics are longer in part because they are more likely to be lead stories. In fact, about half of the additional time devoted to bad economic news about these statistics can be attributed to this factor. The estimated coefficient on BAD in the GNP regression falls only slightly when LEAD is included as an independent variable. This is also not surprising given that the estimated coefficient on BAD is less significant in the logit regression for GNP.

[16] The size of the estimated parameters on CHG and LEVEL in the inflation regressions are much smaller than the corresponding estimates in the unemployment regressions. However, the interpretation of these parameters requires that we adjust for the greater volatility of the inflation rate. If the monthly change in the inflation rate is unusually large (i.e., twice as large as the mean monthly change) then the length of reports increase, on average, by 16.5 seconds. For unemployment, a similar change (i.e., twice the mean monthly change) causes the length of reports to increase, on average, by 39.8 seconds. When the level of these statistics increase from their respective means to levels commonly associated with recessions (9%) and bursts of inflation (13%), the coverage of unemployment and inflation increases by 36.4 seconds and 19.8 seconds, respectively. Therefore, the coverage of the unemployment rate is more responsive than the coverage of the inflation rate to the level and the magnitude of the change in the corresponding statistic.

In nonelection years, presidential comments appear to influence the length of reports but not whether they are lead stories. In particular, the president can dramatically increase the amount of time the networks devote to the unemployment rate by making a comment about it. In this case, a presidential comment increases the predicted amount of coverage from 136 seconds to 211 seconds.

The regression results for the coverage of these economic statistics during presidential election years are presented in Table 4. The coverage changes significantly during presidential election years.[17] The greatest change is the relative coverage given to bad economic news. With one exception, the amount of coverage no longer depends on whether the economic statistic is deteriorating. All but one of the coefficients on the BAD dummy variable are smaller than the corresponding coefficients in the nonelection year equations, and three of these differences are statistically significant.

With some exceptions, the levels of these statistics become less important and changes become more important in determining the amount of coverage during presidential election years. While three of the four coefficients on the level of unemployment and inflation are positive and statistically significant in the nonelection year equations, the corresponding coefficients in the presidential election year equations are all smaller and statistically insignificant. At the same time, changes in the CPI become much more important. In particular, the coefficients on CHG are significantly larger than the corresponding coefficients in the nonelection year equation. The one important exception is that changes in the unemployment rate become a less important determinant of whether the report leads the evening newscast.

With the exception of the length of reports on the unemployment rate, presidential comments affect the length of reports and the likeli-

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[17] The hypothesis that the entire set of presidential election variables (i.e., the presidential dummy and interaction variables) has no impact on the amount of coverage is rejected at the 5% level for four of the six equations. These four equations are the OLS and logit equations for the coverage of the unemployment rate and the inflation rate. Evaluated at the means of the other independent variables, the probability that the unemployment rate will be a lead story increases from 20% to 33% during a presidential election year. However, the predicted length of these reports is virtually unchanged. In contrast, the predicted coverage of the inflation rate decreases during a presidential election year. The predicted probability that the inflation rate will be a lead story decreases from 27% to 18% and the predicted length of these reports decreases by 17%.

Table 4. Regression Results: Coverage of the Economy During Presidential Election Years

	OLS Coefficients for Number of Seconds of Coverage			Logit Derivatives for Lead Story		
	UR	CPI	GNP	UR	CPI	GNP
Intercept	208.28[n]	41.25	154.55**	−0.388	−0.238**	−0.022
	(1.41)	(1.62)	(3.69)	(−0.52)	(−2.01)	(−0.67)
CHG	189.26**	14.54**[n]	−10.66**	0.064[n]	0.120**[n]	0.001
	(2.42)	(3.41)	(−2.37)	(0.17)	(3.63)	(0.11)
LEVEL	−5.62	1.59	−6.18*	0.069	−0.002	0.005
	(−0.29)	(0.71)	(−1.89)	(0.70)	(−0.19)	(1.41)
BAD	−36.24[n]	51.70**	−27.09[n]	0.008	−0.035[n]	−0.004
	(−1.18)	(2.86)	(−1.07)	(0.05)	(−1.11)	(−0.27)
NOCHG	−38.98[n]	—[a]	—[a]	−0.253[n]	—[a]	—[a]
	(−1.19)			(−1.47)		
RIVAL	−10.24*	−5.18	6.07[n]	−0.074**[n]	−0.061**	−0.007
	(−1.93)	(−1.10)	(0.84)	(−2.28)	(−2.23)	(−1.40)
COMMENT	−32.16[n]	137.70**[n]	—[b]	0.290*	0.201**[n]	—[b]
	(−0.96)	(6.15)		(1.75)	(2.23)	

NOTE: The *t* statistic for the hypothesis that the coefficient equals 0 is shown in parentheses.

[a] Due to the volatility of the inflation rate and the growth rate of real GNP, NOCHG is never equal to 1 for either of these statistics.

[b] None of the presidents commented on GNP during any of the presidential elections.

[n] Significantly different from the corresponding coefficient in nonelection years at $p < .10$, two-tailed test.

* $p < .10$, two-tailed test. ** $p < .05$, two-tailed test.

hood that they are lead stories on the evening newscasts. These comments are very powerful in shaping the amount of coverage that the networks give to these statistics. For example, the probability that a report on the unemployment rate will lead the evening news increases from 29% to 58% as a result of a presidential comment. Similarly, a presidential comment about the inflation rate increases both the probability that it will be a lead story (from 16% to 36%) and the length of the story (from 95 to 233 seconds).

The regression results for the coverage of these economic statistics during off-year congressional election years are presented in Table 5. The coverage of the economy during congressional elections seems to share some of the characteristics of the coverage in both nonelection years and presidential election years.

With one exception, the amount of coverage does not depend on whether the economic statistic is deteriorating. In this case, the coverage is similar to that in presidential election years. In general, the networks do not give greater coverage to bad economic news in election years.

In contrast, the impact of presidential comments closely resembles that in nonelection years. Once again, presidential comments influence the length of reports on the unemployment rate. The other coefficients are statistically insignificant.

Finally, the coefficients on CHG and LEVEL are slightly different from those found for the other two periods. The only change which occurs across both measures of coverage is that changes in the inflation rate have less impact on coverage than in presidential years.

Conclusion

In nonelection years, the networks give greater coverage to bad economic news. This pattern is remarkably stable. Using two different measures of coverage and three different economic statistics, the pattern emerges in all six cases. Also, the differences are not trivial. For the sample used in this paper, reports on the unemployment rate, the inflation rate as measured by the Consumer Price Index, and the growth rate of real GNP were approximately 34% longer and twice as likely to lead the evening newscasts when these statistics were deteriorating holding other factors constant.

We are now left with the difficult question of whether this additional coverage is appropriate. There are two alternative interpretations of the results presented in this paper. First, one could argue that the additional coverage given to bad economic news is appropriate because bad economic news is more important or newsworthy than good

Table 5. Regression Results: Coverage of the Economy During Off-Year Congressional Elections

	OLS Coefficients for Number of Seconds Coverage			Logit Derivatives for Lead Story		
	UR	CPI	GNP	UR	CPI	GNP
Intercept	−32.41	176.42**[np]	133.55**	−0.267	−0.038	−0.038
	(−0.63)	(4.75)	(2.89)	(−1.00)	(−0.20)	(−0.09)
CHG	136.25	−3.34[np]	−0.19	1.020**[p]	0.050**[np]	0.058
	(1.43)	(−0.96)	(−0.03)	(2.09)	(2.46)	(1.09)
LEVEL	28.58**[p]	4.32	6.34**[np]	0.038	0.009	0.033
	(4.24)	(1.53)	(2.04)	(1.03)	(0.55)	(1.25)
BAD	41.97*[p]	−13.85[p]	−3.67	0.002	0.026	0.107
	(1.65)	(−0.69)	(−0.15)	(0.02)	(0.23)	(0.49)
NOCHG	9.23	—[a]	—[a]	0.035	—[a]	—[a]
	(0.21)			(0.15)		
RIVAL	−16.06**	−7.87**	−7.55	−0.100**	−0.080**	−0.114*
	(−2.67)	(−2.49)	(−1.43)	(−2.74)	(−3.31)	(−1.92)
COMMENT	98.61**[p]	−21.81[p]	—[b]	0.093	−0.215[p]	—[b]
	(2.88)	(−0.54)		(0.55)	(−0.87)	

NOTE: The t statistic for the hypothesis that the coefficient equals 0 is shown in parentheses.

[a] Due to the volatility of the inflation rate and the growth rate of real GNP, NOCHG is never equal to 1 for either of these statistics.

[b] None of the presidents commented on GNP during any of the off-year congressional elections.

[n] Significantly different from the corresponding coefficient in nonelection years at $p < .10$, two-tailed test.

[p] Significantly different from the corresponding coefficient in presidential election years at $p < .10$, two-tailed test.

* $p < .10$, two-tailed test. ** $p < .05$, two-tailed test.

economic news. Presumably, network journalists want to describe what the statistics tell us about the current condition of the economy. In this case, it is not clear why bad economic news should be more important than good economic news. However, they also want to describe what the changes measured by the statistics mean for individuals within the economy. In this case, bad economic news may be more newsworthy than good economic news. This assumes that individuals suffer more from bad economic events than they benefit from good economic events. If this is true, viewers may also be inherently more interested in bad economic news.

Alternatively, one could argue that the additional coverage is evidence that the networks overemphasize bad economic news. If so, this coverage could affect the economy. There is already strong evidence that "television news clearly and decisively influences the priorities that people attach to various national problems, and the considerations they take into account as they evaluate political leaders or choose between candidates for political office" (Kinder and Iyengar, 1987: 117). If the networks overemphasize bad economic news, this coverage could potentially cause individuals to acquire a distorted view of the condition of the economy. These misperceptions could directly alter their economic behavior. At the very least, it could be used in judging the performance of political leaders. In response, political leaders might adopt inappropriate policies since "the government must respond to the picture that is in the public mind, even if that picture is unrealistic" (Stein, 1975:41).

The pattern of coverage given to bad and good economic news changes during election years. With two exceptions, network journalists do not give bad economic news more coverage during election years. This evidence is consistent with Robinson and Sheehan's argument that network journalists are more careful to produce balanced reports during election campaigns. Alternatively, this change may instead reflect the relative difficulty of interpreting and communicating the significance of good economic news in these two periods. The political significance of good economic news is very apparent during an election campaign. In contrast, the economic significance of good economic news in a nonelection year may be more unclear to reporters and/or difficult to communicate to viewers. As a result, reporters may find it easier to build stories around good economic news during election years than nonelection years.

This increase in the relative coverage given to good economic news controls for the separate impact of presidential comments, which are very powerful in shaping the amount of coverage that the networks give to these statistics, particularly during presidential election campaigns. This ability to influence the amount of coverage, however, does not ensure that the coverage is favorable:

> In an age of network journalism, the president may determine, more than ever, what the newshole is. But presidents do not do nearly so well at determining news quality. The networks have made it very hard to control tone. (Robinson and Sheehan, 1983:204)

It is hard to imagine, however, that this ability to influence the amount of coverage does not ultimately benefit the president. For example, Kinder and Iyengar present evidence that television news "primes" viewers to evaluate presidents according to the issues which receive more coverage. As a result, if the president wants to be evaluated on the basis of the success of his economic policies, he can indirectly "prime" voters by repeatedly making comments about the economy.

The evidence that television news plays a powerful role in shaping public opinion requires that we examine the "thorny question" of how faithfully their coverage reflects reality. This is a difficult question because it ultimately rests on value judgments concerning the role of the networks, the definition of "faithful" coverage, and even what is meant by reality. Nevertheless, it is possible to collect empirical evidence on the decisions made by the networks' journalists concerning the amount of coverage given to different issues. For example, the results presented in this paper raise the possibility that the networks are excessively negative in their coverage of the economy during nonelection years. This is a topic that deserves further research and discussion.

Appendix

The length of network reports (TIME) on the unemployment rate, the inflation rate as measured by the CPI, and the growth rate of real GNP are assumed to be determined by

$$\begin{aligned}\text{TIME} = {} & \alpha_0 + \alpha_1\,\text{CHG} + \alpha_2\,\text{LEVEL} + \alpha_3\,\text{BAD} + \alpha_4\,\text{RIVAL} + \alpha_5\,\text{COMMENT} \\ & + \alpha_6\,\text{PRES} + \alpha_7\,\text{P*CHG} + \alpha_8\,\text{P*LEVEL} + \alpha_9\,\text{P*BAD} + \alpha_{10}\,\text{P*RIVAL} \\ & + \alpha_{11}\,\text{P*COMMENT} + \alpha_{12}\,\text{CONG} + \alpha_{13}\,\text{C*CHG} + \alpha_{14}\,\text{C*LEVEL} \\ & + \alpha_{15}\,\text{C*BAD} + \alpha_{16}\,\text{C*RIVAL} + \alpha_{17}\,\text{C*COMMENT} + \epsilon. \qquad (1)\end{aligned}$$

The dependent variable, TIME, is the number of seconds of coverage given to the economic statistic. The independent variables are the absolute value of the change in the economic statistic (CHG), the level of the statistic (LEVEL), a dummy variable for whether the statistic is deteriorating (BAD), the length of the other major story of the day (RIVAL), a dummy variable for whether the president comments on the economic statistic (COMMENT), dummy variables for whether it is a presidential or congressional election year (PRES, CONG), and a full set of interaction terms between PRES, CONG, and the other independent variables (P*CHG, P*LEVEL, P*BAD, P*RIVAL, P*COMMENT, C*CHG, C*LEVEL, C*BAD, C*RIVAL, and C*COMMENT). The error term, ϵ, is assumed to have a mean of 0.

In nonelection years, the expected length of these reports is given by

$$E[\text{TIME} \mid \text{PRES} = 0, \text{CONG} = 0] = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1\,\text{CHG} + \alpha_2\,\text{LEVEL} + \alpha_3\,\text{BAD} + \alpha_4\,\text{RIVAL} + \alpha_5\,\text{COMMENT}. \tag{2}$$

The estimates of the α's are presented in Table 3. The remaining parameters in equation (1) tell us how the coverage of these economic statistics change during election years. In particular, the expected length of these reports in presidential election years is given by

$$E[\text{TIME} \mid \text{PRES} = 1] = \beta_0 + \beta_1\,\text{CHG} + \beta_2\,\text{LEVEL} + \beta_3\,\text{BAD} + \beta_4\,\text{RIVAL} + \beta_5\,\text{COMMENT}, \tag{3}$$

where $\beta_k = \alpha_k + \alpha_{k+6}$ for $k = 0, \ldots, 5$. For example, the coefficient on BAD in the presidential election year equation, β_3, equals the corresponding coefficient in the nonelection year equation, α_3, plus α_9. The estimates of the β's are presented in Table 4.

The estimates of the α's and β's are exactly the same as those produced by running separate regressions on the observations for nonelection and presidential election years, respectively. The advantage of this formulation is that it allows us to formally test whether the coverage of the economy changes during election years. For example, the statistical test of whether α_9 equals 0 is equivalent to asking whether BAD has the same effect on coverage in both presidential and nonelection years, i.e., whether $\beta_3 = \alpha_3$. Using an F test, it is also possible to test whether the entire set of presidential election year variables has a statistically significant impact on coverage.

During off-year congressional elections, the expected length of these reports is given by

$$E[\text{TIME} \mid \text{CONG} = 1] = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1\,\text{CHG} + \gamma_2\,\text{LEVEL} + \gamma_3\,\text{BAD} + \gamma_4\,\text{RIVAL} + \gamma_5\,\text{COMMENT}, \tag{4}$$

where $\gamma_k = \alpha_k + \alpha_{k+12}$ for $k = 0, \ldots, 5$. The estimates of the γ's are presented in Table 5.

Finally, this approach assumes that the variances of the disturbance terms are equal across the three subsamples (nonelection, presidential, and congressional election years). This assumption can be tested. For example, we can test whether the variance of the disturbance term for the coverage of unemployment is the same in nonelection and presidential election years. In all nine cases (three statistics and three subsamples), we accept the null hypothesis at the 5% level of significance. In only one case was the null hypothesis rejected at the 10% level of significance. Therefore, the evidence strongly supports the use of this model to test whether the coverage of the economy changes during election years (for a more detailed discussion of this type of model, see Kmenta, 1986:468–471).

A second measure of coverage is whether or not the report on the economic statistic leads an evening news program. In this case, the probability (P) that the economic report will be the lead story is estimated using the following cumulative logistic function:

$$P = E[\text{LEAD}|Z] = e^Z/(1 + e^Z), \tag{5}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} Z = {} & \delta_0 + \delta_1\,\text{CHG} + \delta_2\,\text{LEVEL} + \delta_3\,\text{BAD} + \delta_4\,\text{RIVAL} + \delta_5\,\text{COMMENT} \\ & + \delta_6\,\text{PRES} + \delta_7\,\text{P*CHG} + \delta_8\,\text{P*LEVEL} + \delta_9\,\text{P*BAD} + \delta_{10}\,\text{P*RIVAL} \\ & + \delta_{11}\,\text{P*COMMENT} + \delta_{12}\,\text{CONG} + \delta_{13}\,\text{C*CHG} + \delta_{14}\,\text{C*LEVEL} \\ & + \delta_{15}\,\text{C*BAD} + \delta_{16}\,\text{C*RIVAL} + \delta_{17}\,\text{C*COMMENT} + \mu. \end{aligned} \tag{6}$$

The variable LEAD is a qualitative dependent variable that equals 1 if the report on the economic statistic leads the evening news program; otherwise, LEAD equals 0. The definitions of the independent variables are the same as those used earlier, and μ is an error term with a zero mean. This model is very similar to the previous model. In particular, it allows us to formally test the impact of elections on the probability that reports on economic statistics will be lead stories.

Since this probability is a nonlinear function of the independent variables, the estimated coefficients cannot be interpreted as the probability changes associated with a one-unit increase in the corresponding independent variable. In other words, the estimated coefficients cannot be given the same interpretation as ordinary least squares coefficients. These changes, however, can be estimated using the estimated coefficients of the logit model and specific values of the independent variables. These probability changes are given by

$$\partial P/\partial x_i = [e^Z/(1 + e^Z)^2]\delta_i, \tag{7}$$

where x_i refers to the ith independent variables (for a more detailed discussion of the logit model, see Kmenta, 1986:550–553).

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THE MISSING LINK
POLITICAL ACTIVISTS AND SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL PRAYER

JOHN C. GREEN AND
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Abstract Explanations for the wide gap between strong public support for school prayer and lack of support in Congress have focused on the attributes of the public. Here another important explicand is investigated: the characteristics of political activists. We find that activist opinion more nearly matches congressional behavior on school prayer than does public opinion. While many of the same demographic and religious variables explain support for school prayer among activists and the public, ideology appears to be more important among activists.

One of the most resilient political controversies of the past decade has been over prayer in the public schools. Set off by Supreme Court rulings in *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) and *Abington School District v. Schempp* (1963), this debate has elicited endless litigation and constant efforts to amend the Constitution, evade Supreme Court edicts, or circumvent the decisions through legislative action by Congress or the states.

One reason for the persistent agitation is easy to discern: a majority of Americans favor religious exercises in public schools. Although various polls differ—in large part because of question wording (Feig and Wall, 1987)—they concur in finding impressive public support for school prayer, support which has declined only modestly over time. The 1974 General Social Survey found 67.9% favoring required reading of the Lord's Prayer or Bible verses, a figure which dipped to 59.7% in 1982 and 55.6% in 1985. In a more "voluntarist" vein, 72.1% of voters in the 1980 National Election Study favored allowing schools to start each day with prayer; four years later the figure remained at 71.5% (Elifson and Hadaway, 1985; Feig, 1986). In 1983 Gallup found 81% of the "aware" public favoring a constitutional amendment allowing

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voluntary school prayer, with 48% backing the amendment "very strongly."

Despite this massive support, all school prayer amendments have failed in Congress. Although the 1980 and 1984 GOP platforms endorsed school prayer and President Reagan put it on the "front burner" in 1983-84, the Republican Senate mustered only 56 of the needed 67 votes. The Democratic House of Representatives refused to bring the measure to the floor, although a similar appropriations rider failed to win even a majority, 194–215 (Congressional Quarterly, 1984: 8–9S, 88–89H). Both houses split along party and ideological lines: in the Senate 67% of the Republicans but only 42% of the Democrats voted for the amendment, while in the House the comparable figures were 79% and 29%. Similarly, if members are divided into equal thirds by Americans for Democratic Action ratings, the most conservative members favored the amendment by 89% (Senate) and 83% (House), the moderates gave 41% and 31% of their votes, and the most liberal third provided only 15% and 5% support. Far from responding to public attitudes, many legislators apparently ignore them.

Why the strong resistance? Earlier studies have contended that the characteristics of school prayer advocates, not their numbers, have been the crucial weakness of the restorationist movement. Elifson and Hadaway (1985) argue that this majority may be "too silent" to be heard by Congress: proponents have lower incomes, lower status jobs, and less education, while legislators have the opposite traits, which are associated with opposition to school prayer. In addition, school prayer may not be salient to many proponents, and thus they may not press the issue. Finally, Elifson and Hadaway suggest that religious leaders, an elite to which Congress may pay disproportionate attention on this issue, are themselves divided over school prayer.

These explanations all have some validity, but they leave out other key elites, especially political activists. The partisan and ideological cleavages in Congress hint that legislators are responding not so much to the public as to their "primary constituents," those who provide crucial campaign support: volunteer workers, financial backers, and party and issue activists (Fenno, 1978:19).

Indeed, many scholars hold that such activists provide the most effective linkage between the public and their representatives (Luttbeg, 1981). They play crucial roles in the two major paths of influence between legislators and their constituents: directly by means of electoral choice and indirectly through shared characteristics (Miller and Stokes, 1963). In these capacities, activists help make representative democracy possible on a large scale, allowing the public opportunities to check the behavior of elected officials, if not to provide instruction on their preferences (Dahl, 1982). And this process may work in reverse as well: activists inform and educate the public about the positions of officials (Fenno, 1978). By the same token, however, biases in the attitudes, behavior, and numbers of activists raise serious questions about the functioning of democratic institutions. While deviations from public opinion can sometimes support democratic procedural values (as in support for civil liberties), in general they must be regarded as suspect.

In this article, we consider attitudes on school prayer among a large and important group of political activists: major contributors to parties and ideological political action committees (PACs). As we shall see, the division of opinion among these elites is much different than that in the mass public, but quite similar to that in Congress.

Sample

Our data are from a mail survey of a stratified random sample of 5,650 contributors to 60 party, ideological, and interest group PACs, drawn from Federal Election Commission records in July 1982. The PACs surveyed include the national fund-raising committees of the Republican and Democratic parties, the ten largest ideological PACs, the most prominent national business organizations and labor unions, and single-issue PACs. (For PAC categories and brief examples, see Table 1 and the Appendix. For fuller information on most PACs listed, see Sabato, 1984). Because federal law requires PACs to report only contributors of $200 or more per election cycle, our sample consists largely of major donors. The survey was conducted between September 1982 and December 1983, at the height of the school prayer controversy in Congress. We followed the essentials of the Dillman et al. (1974) technique: maximum personalization and repeated contacts (up to five). We received 2,827 usable questionnaires for a response rate of 52.3% (excluding 245 questionnaires returned as undeliverable—4% of the original sample). This response is quite good for a major contributor survey (cf. Brown, Hedges, and Powell, 1976:56–60). Analysis of response rate by type of PAC, region of residence, sex, and size of contribution reveals no disturbing response biases, although Republican party and conservative PAC donors had a slightly higher response rate than their Democratic and liberal counterparts.

The questionnaire was a ten-page, 350-item form designed to elicit political attitudes, affiliations, and demographic information. Our dependent variable, support for school prayer, has previously been measured by a variety of questions used by Gallup, CPS, and NORC, emphasizing "state-sponsorship" or "voluntarist" interpretations, including or excluding the Supreme Court's role in current interpretations, and introducing pro- or antireligious components (Feig and Wall, 1987). We hoped to approximate as closely as possible the policy choices confronting legislators in 1982–83, without introducing other elements. Thus, the dependent variable was measured by the following question: "We need a constitutional amendment to allow voluntary prayer in public schools. [Strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, strongly disagree]." Although the choice of the word *need* was perhaps unfortunate, arguably introducing an element of constitutional interpretation rather than policy support, the question was included in a long battery of policy decisions, most of which were couched in more conventional "support–oppose" terminology. Numerous write-in comments all addressed the policy question and suggested no problems in interpretation. Thus, we have a great deal of confidence that those who agreed favored the amendment, rather than merely thinking that constitutional change was necessary to instigate the specified alteration in policy.

On the basis of mass public studies, we included the following independent variables (see Tables 2 and 3 for the scales employed):

Demographic variables: Age, level of education, college major, region, size of place, sex, occupation, number of children, and traditional family structure (three-point scale: extent to which respondent's mother or spouse or respondent herself is a traditional homemaker, and whether the respondent is married and never divorced; cf. Sapiro, 1983).

Religious variables: Denomination (modified Stark and Glock [1970] scale of denominational conservatism), importance of doing God's will and following a strict moral code, and church membership.

Attitudinal variables: Self-identified ideology and partisanship; attitudes toward tuition tax credits, gay rights, ERA, abortion, drug enforcement, states' rights, defense spending, balanced budget amendment, and gun control; confidence in local schools, the Supreme Court, and religious authorities; and support for civil liberties (three point scale: extent to which respondent would allow a member of a group he or she regards as "dangerous" to speak in public, run for office, or teach in a public school; cf. Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982).

Results

Unlike the mass public, political contributors are sharply divided over school prayer, with a slight advantage to opponents (Table 1). And among all donors, there are 10% more who strongly oppose an amendment than strongly support it. Only right-wing PACs overwhelmingly back the amendment (and only a few show intense majorities), while Republicans provide more modest (and less enthusiastic) backing. On the other side, school prayer finds few proponents among Democratic party contributors and virtually none among the party's ideological and interest-group allies, who are massively and strongly opposed. In addition, only 4% of the contributors listed school prayer as one of the most important problems facing the country, and of those, 60% were opposed to school prayer. Thus, not only does activist opinion run against school prayer, but intensity does as well. The real drive behind the amendment comes from the "hard right": conservative third parties, antifeminist groups, right-wing GOP candidate committees, New Right PACs, and the Christian Right.

Contributors are obviously more divided on this issue than the general public. What accounts for this difference? In one way, our results are consistent with previous studies: most traits which predict support for school prayer among voters also obtain among contributors. Of course, campaign contributors are of much higher social status than the general public, being wealthier, better educated with higher status jobs, older, probably less religious, and certainly less likely to be conservative Protestants (Green and Guth, 1986). Thus, part of the gap between public and activist opinion may be accounted for by the prevalence among the latter of social traits associated with opposition to school prayer.

Despite the generally high status of most contributors, we find these variables actually predict opinion on school prayer as well as—or better than—in the mass public (Table 2). In fact, the only demographic variable which shows no relationship is income. Southern and Midwestern donors are most likely to favor a prayer amendment, as are older contributors, those from blue-collar and clerical occupations, those with modest educations or who studied applied or business subjects in college, those from small towns and rural areas, and those with children and from traditional families. Women are less supportive (probably because liberals dominate among female contributors).

As with the mass public, religious variables influence donors' attitudes on school prayer. While our variables are not identical to those used in mass surveys, they show comparable results: donors for whom "doing God's will" and "following a strict moral code" are very important are much more likely to back school prayer, as are active church members and sectarian Protestants. Catholics and mainline Protestants are less supportive, while liberal Protestants, Jews, and those with no preference are strongly opposed.

The same political and social attitudes which predict support for

Table 1. Support for School Prayer Amendment, PAC and Party Contributors

	Net Agree	Opinion Distribution					Weighted *N*	Raw *N*
		SA	A	N	D	SD		
Cons. third party	+81%	26%	63%	3%	5%	3%	10	34
Antifeminists	+79	53	32	12	3	0	29	67
GOP candidate	+67	38	40	10	9	3	200	142
NCPAC	+65	40	37	11	10	2	148	66
Christian Right	+57	68	10	1	18	3	15	52
Other New Right	+50	34	35	12	17	2	250	168
Old Right	+44	22	44	12	12	10	103	176
Business	+31	14	46	11	24	5	399	86
Gun owners	+31	12	48	11	9	20	24	43
Republican party	+24	23	34	11	23	10	1,655	278
All Donors	− 7	17	25	9	22	27	4,272	2,827

Jesse Jackson	−31	13	18	7	21	41	22	51
Labor	−37	12	15	9	22	42	352	90
Democratic party	−48	7	17	4	29	43	340	295
Libertarian party	−68	2	10	3	22	63	31	72
Dem. candidate	−71	3	10	3	19	65	155	218
Social Democrats	−77	8	2	3	23	64	10	55
Gun control	−77	1	10	1	18	70	14	39
New politics	−81	4	4	3	19	70	119	221
John Anderson	−85	3	3	3	29	62	211	298
NCEC	−88	2	3	2	23	70	65	103
Old Left	−88	1	4	2	33	60	25	64
Feminists	−88	1	4	2	33	60	59	142
Citizens party	−88	0	2	8	25	65	18	36
Jewish PACS	−97	0	0	3	55	42	21	31

NOTES: SA = strongly agree, A = agree, N = neutral, D = disagree, SD = strongly disagree. Because donors to smaller PACS were over-represented in the survey, the sample was weighted according to the amount of money raised in the 1982 election cycle. All analyses below were performed with unweighted data with similar results. For additional information see Green and Guth, 1986. See Appendix for fuller description of donor categories.

Table 2. Support for School Prayer Amendment, by Demography and Religiosity

Characteristic	Support	Characteristic	Support
Region		City size	
Northeast	28%	Metropolitan area	31%
West	38	Small city	50
Midwest	47	Small town, rural	58
South	59	Sex	
Age		Female	29
To 35 years	20	Male	46
36–50 years	32	Number of children	
51–65 years	46	No children ever	35
66 years or over	53	Children	49
Occupation		Family structure	
Professional	25	Nontraditional	35
Technical	42	Conventional	42
Business	52	Traditional	53
Clerical	62	College major	
Blue collar	69	Humanities	27
Education		Social science	34
Postgraduate work	31	Science	35
College graduate	42	Business	50
Some college	51	Applied degrees	59
High school diploma	66	Church membership	
Less than high sch.	83	Not a member	11
Denomination		Member	48
None	3	Active member	56
Jewish	7	Following a strict moral code	
Liberal Protestant	16	Not important	15
Roman Catholic	46	Somewhat important	33
Mainline Protestant	49	Very important	56
Conser. Protestant	67		
Sectarian Protestant	73		
Doing God's will			
Not important	15		
Somewhat important	36		
Very important	62		

school prayer in the mass public appear among activists as well (Table 3). Although precise activist–mass comparisons are impossible, given different question wording and measurement of the variables, our best approximations suggest that contributor attitudes are much closer to the congressional vote patterns noted above than are public attitudes (cf. Elifson and Hadaway, 1985). For example, contributors are much

Table 3. Support for School Prayer Amendment, by Attitudinal Characteristics

Characteristic	Support	Characteristic	Support
Ideology		Partisanship	
Very liberal	12%	Strong Democratic	18%
Liberal	13	Weak Democratic	14
Moderate	23	Independent	28
Conservative	57	Weak Republican	47
Very conservative	66	Strong Republican	59
Trust Supreme Court		Trust religious institutions	
Trust a lot	35	Trust a little	37
Trust some	43	Trust some	41
Trust little	59	Trust a lot	51
Trust local schools		Support for civil liberties	
Trust a lot	30	Fully tolerant	26
Trust some	41	Some tolerance	53
Trust little	55	Fully intolerant	64

Issues	Liberal Position[a]	Conservative Position[a]
Abortion	19%	70%
Gay rights	17	68
Defense spending	14	65
Gun control	24	63
Tuition tax credits	16	58
Equal rights amendment	12	56
Balanced budget amendment	12	56
Federalism	9	54
Drug enforcement	14	52

[a] Strongly agree and agree, strongly disagree and disagree are combined.

more sharply polarized along ideological lines. Self-identified political ideology shows a strong relationship: conservative donors (61%) are almost as supportive as conservative citizens (70%), but moderate and liberal contributors are much less favorable (23% versus 61% and 12% versus 49%, respectively; mass opinion gauged from 1982 NORC survey). Predictably, Republicans are more supportive than independents and Democrats, but again there is a small gap between Republican contributors and voters (57% versus 77%) and a much larger one between independent and Democratic donors and voters (42% versus 74% and 13% versus 71%; mass opinion gauged from 1982 AIPO poll).

Among activists school prayer is a part of a "traditional values" ideology, consisting of conservative stances on tuition tax credits, gay rights, ERA, abortion, drug enforcement, states' rights, defense spending, a balanced budget amendment, gun control, and civil liberties. Understandably, distrust of the Supreme Court, distrust of local school authorities, and trust in religious leaders are also part of this syndrome.

These attitudinal biases are not reflected in differences in rates or kinds of activism. From the right to the left, the level of campaign activity, extent of financial involvement, and participation in party and interest groups do not vary with support for or opposition to school prayer. Differences do occur between right and left, however, reinforcing the dominant pattern: conservative donors are somewhat more numerous and active than their liberal counterparts. Thus, ironically, the most notable "representational failure" is the attitudinal distance of Democratic and liberal legislators from their supporters in the mass public—but these same Democrats and liberals more nearly reflect the preferences of their activist constituencies.

To confirm these findings and establish the relative importance of the independent variables, we performed a multivariate analysis of our data: a regression analysis with the original variables is presented in Table 4, followed by a path model in Figure 1, where the initial variables have been replaced by factor scores. The regression is quite revealing: when all the variables are forced into the equation, support for New Right "platform planks" has the strongest independent impact on support for school prayer, even absorbing the effects of self-identified partisanship and ideology. The independent influence of religious and demographic variables is markedly less, as a comparison of the betas and r's reveals. Indeed, their weak performance suggests that social and religious traits operate primarily through political attitudes to produce support for—and opposition to—conservative social proposals (Guth and Green, 1987).

The limitations of regression analysis in this case, given the high degree of intercorrelation among the independent variables, raises questions concerning causal order (Lewis-Beck, 1978). While a full causal model is beyond the scope of this article, we can borrow from Roof and Hoge (1980) a plausible causal sequence: demographic characteristics influence religiosity, which in turn undergirds attitudes, including support for school prayer. The path diagram in Figure 1 sketches out this model and presents calculations of the direct and indirect impact of each set of variables. To make the model more manageable, the original variables have been replaced with factor scores.

Factor analysis of the 26 original variables produced an eight-factor solution with a straightforward interpretation. The attitudinal variables

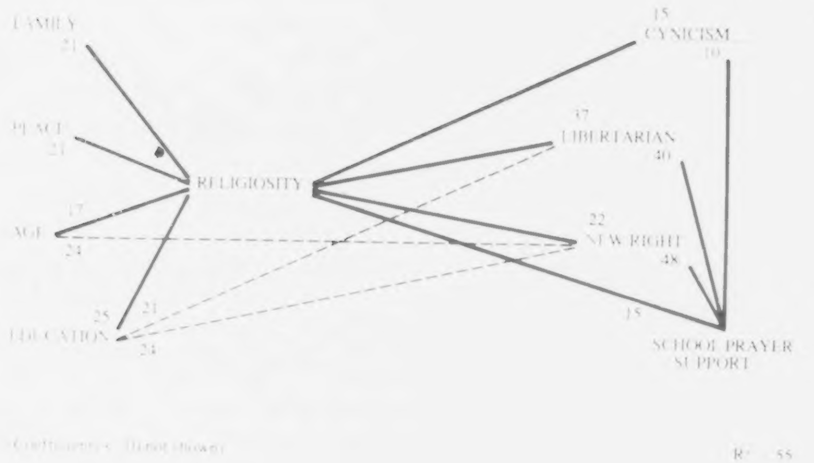
Table 4. Support for School Prayer Amendment, Regression Analysis

	r	Beta
Support for defense spending	.56*	.17*
Support for budget amendment	.48*	.15*
Support for tuition tax credits	.49*	.14*
Opposition to gun control	.46*	.13*
Opposition to abortion	.48*	.12*
Following God's will	.47*	.09*
Religious denomination	.43*	.08*
Trust in organized religion	.13*	.08*
Support for strict drug laws	.44*	.07*
Support for federalism	.48*	.07*
Opposition to gay rights	.52*	.06*
Age	.21*	.05*
Trust in Supreme Court	−.15*	−.06*
Support for civil liberties	−.37*	−.05*
Years of education	−.25*	−.05*
City size	−.24*	−.04*
Region of residence	.23*	.04*
Opposition to ERA	.49*	.03
Church membership	.22*	.02
Ideological self-identification	.49*	.02
Partisan self-identification	.40*	.02
Follow strict moral code	.31*	.01
Sex	.15*	.01
College major	.16*	.00
Traditional family	.12*	.00
Occupation	.10*	.00
Number of children	.09*	.00
Adjusted R^2		.58

NOTES: All attitudinal variables are five-point scales. Other variables are coded as in Tables 2 and 3. Variables are ordered by size of betas.

* $p < .05$.

loaded on three factors: one summarizing the New Right issues (defense spending, balanced budget, tuition tax credits, gun control, abortion, federalism, self-identified partisanship and ideology), which we have labeled NEW RIGHT; another pertaining to individual rights (support for civil liberties, ERA, gay rights, and drug enforcement), which we have labeled LIBERTARIAN; and a third, expressing distrust for the



	Direct Impact	Indirect Impact	Total Impact
NEW RIGHT	.48	—	.48
LIBERTARIAN	−.40	—	−.40
RELIGIOSITY	.15	.27	.42
CYNICISM	.10	—	.10
EDUCATION	(−.06)	−.31	−.37
AGE	(.01)	.23	.24
PLACE	(.02)	.08	.10
FAMILY	(.01)	.08	.09

Coefficients not shown in Figure 1 are given in parentheses

Figure 1. Support for School Prayer Amendment: Path Model

Supreme Court and local school boards, which we have labeled CYNICISM.

All the religious variables loaded on a single factor, which we labeled RELIGIOSITY. The demographic indicators loaded on four factors: PLACE (region and city size), FAMILY (sex, traditional family, and number of children), AGE, and EDUCATION (years of schooling, college major, and occupation). All factors had eigenvalues of 1.0 or better; the scores employed in the path analysis were produced in separate runs with all factor loadings of at least .20.

The path model supports the hypothesized relationships, accounting for 55% of the variance in opinion. Unlike the mass public, where Elifson and Hadaway (1985) found religiosity, education, and age to be the best predictors of support for school prayer, ideological measures perform far better among activists. Indeed the direct impact of New Right issues is more than three times that of religiosity and eight times that of the strongest demographic variable, education. Likewise, libertarian attitudes show a strong negative impact of similar magnitude, far in excess of religious and social characteristics. In fact, religious values barely outperform our cynicism measure, and no demographic measure performs as well.

Nevertheless, religious and demographic variables do have a considerable indirect influence on activist support for school prayer. Once the effects of religion and education on political attitudes are taken into account, they rival the influence of New Right and libertarian values. Age, place, and family background also show considerable indirect influence. Hence, among political activists, support for school prayer is strongly associated with New Right issues, while opposition reflects support for libertarian values; the former is grounded in "localist" social traits, such as traditional religiosity, and the latter is tied to more "cosmopolitan" social traits, exemplified by high levels of education.

Conclusions

Although our argument must remain speculative, these findings suggest that an important reason for the absence of majority rule on school prayer is a "missing link": the lack of support among liberal and Democratic activists. Indeed, the explanations offered by Elifson and Hadaway (1985) are strongly evident among political donors. Like clergy and national legislators, contributors and other activists are sharply divided on this issue (Burrell and Carlson, 1987; Baker, Moreland, and Steed, 1986). Furthermore, opposition is generally more intense than support. And donors, like other elites, are more likely to possess the attitudinal, religious, and demographic traits associated with opposition to school prayer. Rather than having broad but relatively shallow support—as it does among voters—school prayer has a much narrower base among activists, being central only to the agenda of the New Right. Despite the impressive campaigns on behalf of school prayer mounted by right-wing activists (Hertzke, 1988), the conservative beachhead in Congress is far too narrow to accomodate all of their troops.

Of course, causality may run in the other direction: elected officials may "educate" activists on school prayer, rather than the other way around. These effects in the present case are likely to be small. First, legislators may strain to pick up the slightest changes in public sentiment, but the consistent views of activists are generally more "audible" than unstructured and inchoate mass opinion and thus are often taken for the "voice of the people" (Hershey, 1984:259). Second, in our sample, activists with characteristics most like those of the mass public are the strongest supporters of school prayer, even though they appear to have as much contact with elected officials as more cosmopolitan donors, suggesting that activist opinion is rooted in deeper identifications not easily manipulated (Powell, 1978). And last, our sample represents well the very kind of groups from which public officials are recruited (indeed, some two dozen of our respondents are former congressmen or congressional candidates). Rather than officials educating activists, it is more probable that donors and officials partake of the same subcultures, thus reinforcing shared values and worldviews (Powell, 1982). Even without these considerations, our central conclusion stands: if activist opinion reflects largely the attitudes of elected officials, liberal and Democratic activists have failed to educate their voters on school prayer, and from the point of democratic theory, the representative link remains broken.

Thus, activist opinion can be as much a barrier to the reflection of public attitudes in Congress as a transmission mechanism for such attitudes. This fact reminds us that activist and elite preferences have a life of their own, often reflecting concerns unrelated, and even hostile, to views widely held by the public. Here we might hazard that liberal and Democratic values of pluralism, tolerance, and strict separation of church and state are far more important to activists than the widespread preferences of their followers or the public at large (McCloskey and Brill, 1985). And there may well be, of course, issues where the "traditional values" of conservative activists overstate the opinions of even their own publics (Crawford, 1980). One of the persistent complaints about American politics is clearly illustrated, however: political activists and elites, be they the "liberal establishment" or the "power elite," often distort the expected linkage between public opinion and public policy.

Appendix. Examples of Organizations Included in Each Category in Table 1

Category	Organization
Antifeminist	Eagle Forum
Conservative third party	Populist, States' Rights, Conservative
NCPAC	National Conservative Political Action Committee
GOP candidate	Citizens for the Republic (Reagan), Gerald Ford Leadership Committee
Christian Right	Moral Majority, Christian Voice Moral Government Fund
Other New Right	Fund for a Conservative Majority, Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress
Old Right	Americans for Constitutional Action, American Conservative Union
Business	Business and Industry Political Action Committee (BIPAC), US Chamber of Commerce
Gun owners	Gun Owners of America
Republican party	Republican National Committee, National Republican Congressional Committee, National Republican Senatorial Committee
Jesse Jackson	Jackson for President (1984)
Labor	AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education (COPE), United Auto Workers (UAW), Teamsters
Democratic party	Democratic National Committee, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee
Democratic candidate	Fund for a Democratic Majority (Kennedy), Committee for the Future of America (Mondale)
Libertarian party	Libertarian party
Social Democrats	Social Democratic party USA
Gun control	Handgun Control, Inc.
New politics	Council for a Livable World, Sierra Club, Independent Action
John Anderson	National Unity Committee (1980)
NCEC	National Committee for an Effective Congress
Old Left	Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), Democratic Study Group (DSG)
Feminists	National Organization for Women PAC, National Abortion Rights Action League
Citizens party	Citizens party (1980)
Jewish PACs	National PAC

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THE IMPACT OF TELEVISED SPEECHES AND FOREIGN TRAVEL ON PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL

DENNIS M. SIMON AND
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Abstract Considerable attention has been devoted in recent years to the use of political drama by the president, with the most discretionary forms of drama—speeches and foreign travel—receiving much scrutiny. In fact, there has arisen a conventional wisdom which asserts that televised speeches and foreign travel by the president (1) have increased over time, (2) exert a uniformly positive impact on public evaluations of the president's performance, and (3) can therefore be used as a strategy for influencing the president's approval ratings, a vital resource for the modern president. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate this conventional wisdom and thus assess the value of televised speeches and foreign travel as influences on presidential approval. The paper first defines political drama and casts the conventional wisdom in the form of three propositions. It next develops a research strategy for evaluating these propositions in an appropriate manner. Finally, the paper tests the propositions. The results cast considerable doubt on the conventional wisdom and lead to the conclusion that the use of political drama is not an all-purpose strategy guaranteed to halt declines or replenish sizable losses of presidential approval.

One hallmark of the recent literature on the American presidency is the increasing attention devoted to the relationship between presidential behavior and public evaluations of presidential performance. This growth reflects a recognition among students of the presidency that the context in which the chief executive operates and the value of opinion poll results encourage systematic and similar behavior among presidents. First of all, recent descriptions of the modern presidency em-

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phasize that presidents must pursue their objectives within a context of continuous scrutiny and evaluation via the public opinion poll (e.g., Hodgson, 1980; Edwards, 1983). The rise of national polling organizations and the frequency of their surveys has made the presidential performance poll "a part of America's unwritten constitution" (de Sola Pool, 1980:48). The result is what Hodgson (1980:220) calls the *perpetual election* in which "popular acclaim is offered or withheld as if by the tumultuous assembly of the citizens in the marketplace." Most importantly, this new literature also argues that the president's standing in the perpetual election is vital to the success and political survival of administrations. Crespi (1980:42), for example, contends that

> presidential approval ratings have created a pseudo-parliamentary situation, whereby the president faces a monthly vote of confidence from the total electorate. While not binding in any sense, this vote of confidence is accepted by both politicians and political analysts as an indicator of the president's political clout and, therefore, of his ability to govern effectively.

There is considerable evidence to support such claims.

A variety of empirical research documents the *value* of public support as a presidential resource. Evaluations of presidential performance will influence, first of all, citizen choices in both presidential (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde, 1986:187–204) and congressional (Fiorina, 1981) elections. Public support thus exerts a direct and substantial impact on the distribution of seats in Congress (Marra and Ostrom, 1987; Oppenheimer, Stimson, and Waterman, 1986; Lewis-Beck and Rice, 1984). Public support is also a judgment that impinges on the decisions of legislators and the resulting policy outcomes produced in Congress. Satisfaction with presidential performance will influence member support for presidential positions on roll calls (Edwards, 1980), the success of presidential policy initiatives (Rivers and Rose, 1985), and the congressional response to presidential vetoes (Rohde and Simon, 1985). Because public support provides presidents with political leeway for action (Neustadt, 1980), it will also influence the behavior of presidents. Thus, it has been shown that there is a relationship between public support and the boldness of the president's legislative agenda (Light, 1982), the frequency of vetoes (Rohde and Simon, 1985), and decisions to use military force (Ostrom and Job, 1986).

This research establishes both the value of public support as a political resource and, by implication, reveals an incentive for presidents to influence how they are evaluated by the public. Quite naturally, then, research on the presidency has attacked the questions of whether and how presidents can act on this incentive and thereby influence citizen evaluations of their performance. Such studies proceed from the premise that citizen evaluations are amenable to presidential influence. The task, then, is to identify both the levers of influence available to the president and strategies for their use. At this point, the research splits into two segments. The first focuses primarily upon the economic determinants of popular support and includes studies of the political business cycle and macroeconomic management. The objective is to ascertain the sensitivity of public support to economic outcomes (e.g., Hibbs, 1982) and to investigate the policy instruments that can be employed to regulate or manipulate these outcomes (e.g., Tufte, 1978; Golden and Poterba, 1980; Alt and Chrystal, 1983).

The second branch focuses upon incidents that have a short-term influence on popular support. These include analyses of events as well as a variety of presidential activities which can be grouped under the rubric of political drama. Studies that focus on political drama have burgeoned in recent years and become an integral component of the presidency literature. In addition to general treatments of going public (Kernell, 1986; Lowi, 1985; Edwards, 1983), studies have examined the president's reliance on television (Ragsdale, 1984; Kernell, 1986), press relations (Grossman and Kumar, 1981), the timing of press conferences (Lammers, 1981), and foreign and domestic travel by the president (Lammers, 1982). Taken together, this literature emphasizes that political drama is an activity ideally suited to the modern president because it is one relatively easy way for a president to exert a positive influence on citizen evaluations of his performance.

The purpose of our research is to assess the value of political drama as an influence on public support for the president, as part of a larger study of public support and its impact on presidential decision making and effectiveness. The analysis consists of four sections. The first examines the components of political drama used in the literature on public support. From this base, an effort is made to develop a complete set of the episodes that constitute political drama. In section two, three propositions produced by this research are presented. The third section tests these propositions using a data set and methodological approach consistent with the concerns articulated in section three. Finally, the results of the tests are then used to draw several conclusions about the value of political drama as a presidential strategy.

The Architecture of Political Drama

The attention and effort devoted to the study of political drama has its origins in the work of Mueller (1973) who demonstrated that specific and highly focused "events" (mostly international) can be expected to trigger a rally-round-the-flag effect that will produce a short-term burst in public support for the president. Since Mueller's initial analysis, this rationale has been expanded to include a wider range of approval-enhancing events as well as approval-diminishing events such as scandals, urban violence, and widespread political protest (Mueller, 1973; Lee, 1977; MacKuen, 1983; Ragsdale, 1984; Ostrom and Simon, 1985). Our initial examination of these events indicates that the set of episodes that constitute political drama can be partitioned into three subsets.[1]

First, televised speeches and statements by the president play a prominent role in existing compilations of political drama. In the modern era, the use of television has become the major tool of the rhetorical presidency (Caesar et al., 1982). Television provides the president, first of all, with a medium that is more direct and less resistible than alternative forms of communication (Lowi, 1985:63–64). The televised speech enables the president to operate in a setting where he is unhindered by rival decision makers or aggressive reporters. It thus supplies the opportunity to focus public attention, cultivate public support, and use it to acquire leverage over competing decision makers. In many instances, the speech is given in reaction to some action taken by the United States or its adversaries. For example, President Kennedy addressed in the nation twice during the course of the Cuban missile crisis, and on three occasions in 1965, President Johnson ascended the stage to explain developments in the Dominican Republic. In other instances, a presidential speech forms the core of the dramatic episode. MacKuen's estimates (1983:174–176) provide several examples; Johnson's Great Society address of 1965 and Carter's 1978 speech on the crisis of the American spirit are among the more prominent.

A second prominent subset is foreign travel by the president. In particular, travels which involve high-level diplomacy can be expected to capture substantial media attention and provide ample opportunity for the incumbent to look presidential. As Kernell (1986:95) observes, "Meetings abroad with other heads of state are especially valuable in reminding the electorate of the weighty responsibilities of office and of the president's diligence in attending to them." It is no surprise then that the events found to exert a positive impact on public support include a number of foreign travels. For example, the Big Four summit in Geneva (July 1955), the Paris summit (June 1960), and the Vienna meeting between Kennedy and Khrushchev are included in Mueller's list of "rally points" for the period from 1953 to 1968. Since 1968, these prominent diplomatic episodes include Nixon's travels to Peking and Moscow in 1972, Ford's 1974 journey to the People's Republic of China, and Carter's trip to Vienna for the signing of the SALT II accord (see MacKuen, 1983:174–176).

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[1] It is important to emphasize that we are restricting our attention to the forms of political drama which have been routinely used in aggregate-level models of public support for the president. This is not meant to imply that these are the only presidential routes to the political stage. As the work of both Kernell (1986) and Lammers (1982) illustrates, occasions for political drama also include press conferences, addresses to specialized audiences, domestic travel, and assorted White House ceremonies.

The final subset of political drama will be called, for the lack of a better term, presidentially relevant events. After removing all episodes involving presidential trips and speeches from existing compilations, there remains a variety of domestic and international episodes that captured the attention of the public *and* focused it on the president. The impact of such episodes stems from their connection to public expectations about presidential performance (Ostrom and Simon, 1985) and the press coverage which these events receive (Brody, 1983). Further, there is ample evidence that such events can lead to dramatic increases or declines in level of public support for the president. As examples, consider the launching of Sputnik I, the Middle East War of 1967, and the scandal involving Bert Lance, the director of the Office of Management and Budget in the Carter administration.

This paper, which represents our initial investigation of presidential drama, will focus primarily on the first two subsets: televised speeches and presidential travel. Consequently, we will consider the presidentially relevant events only as they coincide with the other two forms of drama.

Political Drama and the Conventional View

The recent research on political drama has produced a conventional wisdom that can be easily summarized in three basic propositions. The first can be expressed as follows:

Proposition 1: Political drama is occurring more frequently

As one team of analysts observed (Minow, Martin, and Mitchell, 1973:14), "Time and again, and in recent years with increasing frequency, presidents have appeared on television to explain their policies, to mobilize support, to go over the heads of the Congress and the political parties, and to speak directly to the people for their cause." Similarly, Kernell's more recent study (1986:83) notes that "dramatic forms of going public have become more commonplace in recent years" and that "the more recent the president, the more often he goes public."[2]

The second proposition drawn from the conventional wisdom refers to the anticipated impact of political drama:

> Proposition 2: The impact of political drama on public support is uniformly positive

The examples are numerous. In commenting upon the results produced by his polling organization, Harris (1970) reached the conclusion that there is "a definite and distinct pattern of increasing support for a President after he has taken to television to appeal for his positions. The pattern is so consistent, with so few exceptions, that it is fair to conclude that presidential use of television almost automatically gives him an important advantage" (also see Hodgson, 1980:191). Other analyses cite the importance of political drama in the political success enjoyed by Presidents Kennedy (Wills, 1981), Nixon (Minow, Martin, and Mitchell, 1973), and Reagan (Lowi, 1985: esp. 12–21). As noted earlier, the inclusion of particular speeches and trips as approval-enhancing events is a standard practice in the research that models the movement of public support over time.

Since it represents the first systematic effort to assess the impact of presidential speeches on public support, the work of Ragsdale (1984) provides the critical evidence in support of the assertion of a uniformly positive impact for presidential speeches. The aggregate-level model of public support formulated by Ragsdale includes measures of such well-recognized influences as the economy and military activity along with positive and negative events. The model also includes a dummy variable for presidential speeches delivered as live radio and television broadcasts "carried by all major networks" (Ragsdale, 1984:972). Her results (table 5, p. 980) lead to three conclusions. First, presidential speeches exert a significant and positive impact on public support; a televised speech will increase public support for the president by approximately three rating points. Second, positive events exert no substantial impact on public support; this result is most intriguing for it suggests that the significant impact of such events reported in past research may be an artifact of the failure to "control" for televised speeches. Finally, while negative events exert a significant and adverse impact on public support, this impact can be neutralized by presidential speeches. These results suggest then that a televised speech allows a president to replenish a portion of the public support lost due to adverse changes in the economic and social environment.

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[2] It should be noted that Kernell's (1986) analysis demonstrates that the less visible forms of activity mentioned in note 1 are primarily responsible for the overall trend of rapid growth in "going public." Nevertheless, his data and commentary indicate an upward, though less explosive, trend in the more dramatic forms as well.

Although some foreign travel is included routinely in compilations of political drama, MacKuen (1983) is the first to provide a systematic estimate of its impact on popular support. MacKuen (1983:188) notes that foreign travel "can be expected to yield an immediate rise of only 2.15 points—one that will vanish fairly quickly." As such, a foreign trip is less likely than a televised speech to provide a substantial boost to the president's popular support.[3]

The third proposition drawn from the conventional wisdom refers to the possibility that presidents may use political drama in a strategic fashion:

> Proposition 3: The use of political drama is an effective strategy for influencing presidential popularity

Perhaps the most important reason for the extensive coverage given to political drama is the fact that it is viewed as an effective presidential strategy. It is efficacious for three reasons. First, it casts the president in a positive light. Second, the timing of such action as well as its content is subject to presidential control. Third, even when control is not absolute, it is relatively easy, especially when compared to the rigors of economic policy-making or the management of protracted military conflicts. In short, the constraints facing the president intent upon using political drama are relatively mild.

The potential benefits that can accrue from such a strategy have been demonstrated in the aggregate support literature—political drama may lead to a jump in the president's approval rating. These bursts help to replenish the president's power reservoir. They may create windows of opportunity for the introduction and passage of policies designed to influence the more long-term determinants of public support; they may also buy time for policies to produce their intended effects.[4] Additionally, the publicity generated by political drama may redirect public attention from presidential liabilities to issues which will produce more favorable assessments of the president. In sum, expectations about the direct and secondary effects of political drama lead to the conclusion that it is both a feasible and valuable short-term strategy for influencing presidential approval. As Kernell (1986:83) argues, political drama is a device that performs "the *homeostatic function* of maintaining public support for the president" (emphasis added).

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3. MacKuen (1983:188, n. 21) also notes that by including only nine foreign trips in his analysis, he may be overestimating the impact of foreign travel on approval. Consequently, he points out that "a number of seemingly less significant trips abroad were not modeled, so this estimate of the expected benefit may be overly generous."

4. For example, Stoll (1987) demonstrates that congressional support for the president's position on key foreign policy issues increases during the 30-day period following a show of military force. This relationship leads Stoll (1987:236) to conclude that "Congress, like the general public, is susceptible to a rally effect in the aftermath of some types of dramatic foreign events."

Empirical Evaluation

A QUESTION OF COMPLETENESS

To assess the impact of political drama on presidential popularity, it is first necessary to address a conceptual problem of completeness. Within the existing research, a question left unanswered is why only some presidential speeches and trips are hypothesized to exert an impact on public support. An examination of the procedures used to compile each of the event collections reveals that the authors typically relied upon published chronologies (e.g., MacKuen's use of the *Information Please Almanac*) in lieu of developing a set of a priori selection criteria. As a result, speeches and trips that received substantial news coverage or speeches and trips that were not "crowded out" by other happenings are included. All others have been excluded. While the literature establishes that some political drama has an impact on presidential approval, it has not provided an adequate foundation to determine whether speeches and trips, as generic classes of drama, have an impact and if not, why not.

To begin to provide a conceptual foundation for the study of political drama, we turn our attention to the identification of *all* speeches and *all* foreign travels by developing an explicit set of selection criteria.

Televised presidential speeches. Insofar as speeches are concerned, a list has been compiled that includes all *discretionary* (see Ragsdale, 1984:973) speeches, statements, and announcements made by the president that were broadcast live by at least one television network. This information was obtained for the period from January 1953 to March 1987 in the following manner. First, a preliminary list of speeches was constructed using the following sources: *Broadcasting*, 1965; Minow, Martin, and Mitchell, 1973; Rutkus, 1976; Kernell, 1986; and the Public Papers of the Presidents series.[5] This preliminary list ex-

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[5] Despite the availability of several published lists of televised speeches and statements by the president, there is little consistency among these sources. As the following illustrates, the sources neither employ the same standards for including a speech nor cover the same time period.

1. *Source: Broadcasting*, 1965; *Dates:* 1/1/53–11/8/65; *Inclusion standard:* Live appearances on programs carried by one or more networks.
2. *Source:* Rutkus, 1976; *Dates:* 4/9/64–10/6/76; *Inclusion standard:* Network television addresses prepared solely for TV audience.
3. *Source:* Minow, Martin, and Mitchell, 1973; *Dates:* 1/20/69–4/30/72; *Inclusion standard:* Network television appearances.
4. *Source:* Kernell, 1986; *Dates:* 1/1/53–5/31/85; *Inclusion standard:* Presidential "Reports to the Nation" broadcast nationwide.

An additional problem arises from the different indexing standards for the entries in the cludes televised press conferences, statements or speeches taped for later rebroadcast, State of the Union addresses, "regular" inaugural speeches, holiday messages, brief interviews during sporting events, and coverage of family weddings.[6] Second, the *New York Times* was used to verify the entries on the preliminary list. All indexes of the *New York Times* were examined for presidential speeches and statements. If a speech was mentioned in the index without a reference to television, then the newspaper text itself was examined. This search involved a check of the television listings on the day of the speech and examination of the story about the speech in the following day's coverage. Thus, to be included on our final list, a televised speech or statement by the president had to be confirmed by at least two of these sources. The results of this procedure are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1 presents, for each president, the total number and annual average of speeches that satisfy our inclusion criteria. Similar information is presented for the subset of prime-time speeches. The totals in Table 1 differ, at times substantially, from those reported in other analyses of presidential television (see Kernell, 1986:88–90; and Ragsdale, 1984:973). This is the result of a broader set of inclusion criteria. Kernell, for example, includes only presidential "Reports to the Nation," a criterion similar to the Rutkus (1976) standard of including only those speeches and statements explicitly prepared for a television audience. Ragsdale (1984) employs only those speeches that were broadcast by all major television and radio networks.

The differences in inclusion criteria are substantial. For example,

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Public Papers of the Presidents series from administration to administration. It is for these reasons that we adopted the two (and, at times, three) source rule in compiling the information presented in Table 1.

[6] There are several reasons for excluding these appearances. As our discussion of the conventional wisdom implies, the purported value of speechmaking as a strategy hinges on the president's control of both the timing and content of the message. Neither inaugural addresses nor State of the Union messages satisfy the timing standard. As Ragsdale (1984:973, esp. n. 6) argues, these speeches are obligatory and relatively invariant with respect to scheduling. As a check on our analysis, approval change scores were calculated for the 18 instances of State of the Union messages in which there were no other speeches, trips, or events during the poll period. The mean approval change for the 18 cases was -1.22; this is statistically indistinguishable from zero. Thus, inclusion of these speeches would not alter the results or inferences presented in this analysis.

Press conferences were excluded for two reasons. First, they were not regularly broadcast over the entire time period included in our analysis; the first live broadcast of a presidential press conference was 25 January 1961. Second, press conferences were excluded because their format raises questions about the president's ability to control the content at these gatherings (see Lammers, 1981). Ceremonial appearances (e.g., family weddings) were not included because there is no systematic record for tracking the frequency of these episodes. The only sources providing information are the *Broadcasting* (1965) article, whose count ends in 1965, and the volume by Minow, Martin, and Mitchell (1973), whose list covers only the 1969–72 period. Thus, a reliable and systematic list of ceremonial appearances could not be compiled.

Table 1. Televised Speeches and Statements of the President, 1953–1987

	All Speeches		Prime-Time Only		
President	Number	Annual Average	Number	% of All	Annual Average
Eisenhower	45	5.63	30	67	3.74
Kennedy	19	6.52	11	58	3.77
Johnson	48	9.44	12	25	2.36
Nixon	47	8.41	33	70	5.90
Ford	10	4.13	6	60	2.48
Carter	21	5.24	13	62	3.25
Reagan	26	4.11	24	92	3.79
Total	216	6.39	129	60	3.76

NOTE: The entries in the table include all discretionary presidential speeches, statements, and announcements which were broadcast live on at least one television network.

Ragsdale (1984:977) observes that President Johnson made only two speeches concerning the Vietnam War, both of which concerned peace gestures (31 March 1968 and 31 October 1968). Our count reveals an additional seven speeches and statements with four delivered during the initial phases of the Vietnam escalation in 1965. For example, on 7 April 1965 President Johnson delivered a speech entitled "Peace Without Conquest" at Johns Hopkins University. The speech was a major statement on U.S. policy in Vietnam; it was also a live prime-time broadcast.[7] The speech, because it was not explicitly prepared for a television audience, does not appear on most lists. This illustrates how our criteria and search procedure provide a more inclusive standard for evaluating the impact of presidential television.

This point seems all the more relevant when we consider which presidential speeches are covered by television. Essentially, there are two ways that network coverage of a speech or statement occurs. First, the president may directly request air time to deliver an address to the nation. According to Rutkus (1976), networks are quite cooperative in providing this time. Between 1966 and 1975, networks granted 44 of 45 presidential requests (Rutkus, 1976:29). The second route to television coverage involves the White House notifying the networks that a scheduled presidential speech is available for network coverage.

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[7] See the *New York Times* edition of 8 April 1965 and, in particular, the page 16 story entitled "Johnson's TV audience figured at 60,000,000."

In this instance, the decision to broadcast the speech is less automatic than direct requests for air time and involves network judgments about the importance of the topic and the potential news value of the speech (see Minow, Martin, and Mitchell, 1973:35–68). The larger number of speeches in Table 1 is primarily a result of incorporating this second route to the political stage in our selection criteria.

Foreign travel. In this analysis, foreign travel by the president is defined as any travel of one full day or more outside the 48 contiguous states. The relevant information on foreign travel was gathered from the *New York Times Index*. Obtaining this information was straightforward; during the period from 1953 to 1987, these indexes contained a section documenting all travel, both domestic and foreign, by the president. We simply recorded those travels which satisfy the criteria described above. The results of this effort, as summarized in Table 2, provide the total number and annual average of all foreign trips along with similar information about *major* trips. This latter category is defined as travel to other continents lasting three days or more (e.g., Nixon's 1972 visit to Peking). Examples of minor trips include the Bermuda conferences with British Prime Minister Macmillan held by Presidents Eisenhower (March 1957) and Kennedy (December 1961).

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To evaluate the three propositions that make up the conventional wisdom concerning political drama, it is necessary to assess the independent impact that speeches and foreign travel exert on public support.[8] To accomplish this objective, consideration must be given to the unit of time employed in empirical work and its relationship to the occurrence of events and the administration of opinion polls. Most typically, the month is used as the time unit, resulting in several problems. In many instances, two or more polls are administered in a given month; this is particularly true in recent times. For example, between 1973 and 1987 the Gallup organization has administered the presidential performance question an average of 19.5 times annually. Given the frequency of polls, reliance on the month (or any fixed time period) is problematic. Averaging all the polls administered in a given month may dilute the impact of drama or mix the approval ratings gathered before and after a particular event.[9] A decision rule which selects either the first or last

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[8] Public support here is defined as the percentage of Gallup poll respondents who approve of the way the president is handling his job. Data on public support for Presidents Eisenhower through Carter were taken from Gallup, 1980:3–39. The approval data for President Reagan were obtained from Gallup, 1987:16–18.

[9] To illustrate this problem, consider the following example involving the attempt to rescue the American hostages held in Teheran in the spring of 1980:

Table 2. Foreign Travel by Presidents, 1953–1987

	All Trips		Major Trips Only	
President	Number	Annual Average	Number	Annual Average
Eisenhower	16	2.00	8	1.00
Kennedy	8	2.74	3	1.03
Johnson	13	2.56	4	0.79
Nixon	18	3.22	7	1.25
Ford	7	2.90	5	2.07
Carter	12	3.00	9	2.25
Reagan	15	2.36	8	1.26
Total	89	2.62	44	1.28

poll in a month is equally troublesome in this regard. A related problem stems from the fact that, on occasion, presidents have delivered more than one televised speech in a month. In such instances, the use of the month as the unit of analysis would only exacerbate these problems. The most essential information in evaluating the impact of political drama is the approval rating in the poll period immediately before and immediately after the dramatic episode. For these reasons, the most appropriate time unit for measurement would seem to be the poll period.

In addition to this concern, there are two associated problems pertaining to the forms of drama that have not been dealt with satisfactorily in the literature. The first is that no distinction is drawn between

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11–14 April—Poll: 39% approve of Carter's performance
24 April—Rescue attempt fails
2–5 May—Poll: 43% approve of Carter's performance
16–19 May—Poll: 38% approve of Carter's performance
30 May–2 June—Poll: 38% approve of Carter's performance

This episode shows two oft-cited features of "rally points." First, as Mueller (1973:212) notes, such international events tend to increase approval regardless of whether the outcome is "good" or "bad." Second, this increase in support is expected to dissipate rather quickly. Note, however, that if a procedure averaging all polls administered in a given month were used, the approval level for May 1980 would be 39.6%. This would create the erroneous impression that the rescue attempt exerted no impact on support for Carter; both the statistically significant increase from 39% to 43% ($Z = 2.23$) and the statistically significant decrease from 43% to 38% ($Z = 2.78$) would be "lost" in the data set. This example demonstrates the importance of poll-to-poll measurement. The use of monthly data will introduce a systematic bias into the analysis. Combining two or more polls administered after any dramatic episode is likely to mute the impact of the episode. This is likely, in turn, to bias any statistical measure of opinion change toward zero and the null hypothesis.

speeches or travels that occur in conjunction with salient events (e.g., JFK's reports on the Cuban missile crisis in 1962) and those that do not (e.g., Gerald Ford's "Whip Inflation Now" speech in October 1974). Second, instances involving both a speech and trip (e.g., Eisenhower's televised reports on the Big Four summit in 1955) are not distinguished from either instances of speeches without trips or trips without speeches. This is not to fault this research, since its objective is to estimate the impact of a broadly defined and mixed set of episodes. However, if the objective is to assess the value of specific forms of political drama, these distinctions become critical and must be incorporated into the analysis. The result of incorporating these distinctions is displayed in Table 3. The table lists the three forms of political drama pertaining to speeches and trips (speech only, trip only, speech and trip) along with the context in which the drama occurs (no event, approval-enhancing event, approval-diminishing event).[10] The table also includes an example for each of the nine mutually exclusive and exhaustive subsets produced by the intersection.[11] Formulating the problem in this manner makes it possible to calculate and compare the impact of *pure speeches* and *pure trips* (i.e., no associated events) with the various *mixed* forms of presidential drama.

These considerations, when coupled with the earlier discussion of completeness, lead to the conclusion that an appropriate test of the conventional wisdom must (1) use a complete list of televised speeches and foreign travel, (2) distinguish between pure and mixed forms of drama, (3) control for approval-enhancing and approval-diminishing events, and (4) employ poll-to-poll measurement.

PROPOSITION 1: THE FREQUENCY OF POLITICAL DRAMA

Televised presidential speeches. Insofar as Proposition 1 is concerned, the information displayed in Table 1 does not support the expectation

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[10] To incorporate such events into the analysis, we have relied on both the categories and results from previous research (Mueller, 1973; Lee, 1977; MacKuen, 1983; Ostrom and Simon, 1985). This research shows, first of all, that there is a class of events that can be expected to trigger a "rally effect" (Mueller, 1973) that increases the president's approval rating *regardless of the substantive outcome associated with the event* (see Mueller, 1973:212). These approval-enhancing events include international crises, foreign policy developments, and episodes involving the personal health and well-being of the president. Second, recent research (MacKuen, 1983; Ragsdale, 1984; Ostrom and Simon, 1985) has shown that certain types of events can create doubt, dissatisfaction, or disappointment and thereby reduce the president's public standing. These approval-diminishing events are primarily domestic in character and include urban unrest, widespread political protest, and scandals within the president's administration.

[11] Note that, in principle, it is possible that both an approval-enhancing and approval-diminishing event can occur in the same poll period (and thus add a fourth row to Table 3). Because no instances of this combination occurred during the time frame of our analysis, we have not included these cells in Table 3.

Table 3. A Typology of Political Drama

	Type of Drama		
Event Category	Speech No Trip	Trip No Speech	Speech and Trip
No event	Ford's "Whip Inflation Now" (10/74)	Carter visits South America and Africa (3/78)	Eisenhower report on Big Four summit (7/55)
Approval-enhancing event	Kennedy reports on missile crisis (11/62)	Nixon visits PRC/signs Shanghai Communique (2/72)	Reagan speech on Lebanon & Grenada/trip to Japan (10/83)
Approval-diminishing event	Eisenhower speech on Little Rock/Crisis in Little Rock (9/57)	Nixon visits Middle East/Watergate (6/74)	Nixon report on USSR visit/Watergate (7/74)

of an increasing trend in the use of television. In fact, when the annual average for all televised speeches for 1953–87 is considered,[12] presidential use of television has declined since the Johnson and Nixon administrations. Presidents Ford, Carter, and Reagan have taken to the airwaves less frequently than any of their predecessors included in the analysis. Note that there is no evidence of a trend in the prime-time category either. When we consider prime-time speeches as a proportion of all television appearances, the table shows two departures from the norm. President Johnson was substantially less reliant on prime-time appearances (12 of 48). In contrast, Ronald Reagan appears to be the quintessential prime-time president, with 24 of his 26 speeches and statements delivered in the evening hours. Overall, however, Table 1 offers little evidence in support of the assertion that presidents have grown more reliant on television as a form of political drama.

Foreign travel. Table 2 shows that there is little variation in overall foreign travel by modern presidents. On average, the president can be expected to take two or three foreign trips per year. As in the case of speeches, the frequency of travel was highest during the Nixon presidency, with 18 trips over the 6½ years of the administration. A number of these, however, were brief visits to locations in the Pacific (e.g.,

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[12] The data collection runs from January 1953 through December 1986.

Midway Island) to meet with military leaders and South Vietnamese officials over the conduct of the Vietnam War. Note that major trips were more frequent during the Ford and Carter administrations. This reflects, in part, the multination summit meeting which came into vogue during this period; both of these presidents attended four of these conferences over the course of their terms. Aside from these rather slight differences, Table 2 reveals no striking patterns in this form of political drama.

To summarize, the basic information on the incidence of a presidential speech and foreign travel for the period from 1953 to 1987 indicates that there are no dramatic trends of growing reliance on either the use of television or foreign travel across presidential administrations. This conclusion is particularly noteworthy since it is based upon a broader and more inclusive list of political drama than is found in the existing research.

PROPOSITION 2: THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL DRAMA

To test Proposition 2 in a manner consistent with the standards previously discussed, a data set has been constructed according to the following procedures. First, the unit of analysis is the particular speech, trip, or combination of the two forms. Thus, all episodes of political drama are identified for inclusion in the data set, and a distinction is drawn between speeches without trips, trips without speeches, and trips with accompanying speeches. Second, to distinguish between pure and mixed forms of drama, it is necessary to control for presidentially relevant events. To exercise such control, we have utilized the *union* of the event sets developed by Mueller (1973:211), Lee (1977:254–255), MacKuen (1983:174–176), and Ostrom and Simon (1985:346–347).[13] For each televised speech or foreign trip, we simply recorded whether a presidentially relevant event occurred *during the same poll period* and, if so, whether that event was approval-enhancing or approval-diminishing.[14] Given this procedure, it is possible to place each instance of political drama into one of the nine categories shown in Table 3. Third, the level of public support was measured using the most recent Gallup poll administered before and after the speech or trip regardless of whether the "pre" and "post" polls were conducted in the same month (for a similar measurement approach, see Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey, 1987). Fourth, in instances where more than one speech was delivered between the pre and post polls, a tiered decision rule was employed. If only one of the speeches was made in conjunction with an event or trip, that speech was included. If one or more mixed-case speeches were delivered, the speech closest to the beginning date of the post poll was selected. In the case of pure speeches, the prime-time speech closest to the beginning date of the poll period was used. If none of the speeches was delivered in prime time, then the speech closest to this date was selected. Finally, we eliminated from consideration all cases where there were no usable "pre" polls (e.g., LBJ's speeches in the days following Kennedy's assassination) or where there were gaps of over 100 days between pre and post polls due to Gallup's suspension of the performance polls during presidential election campaigns. Together, these steps produce a data set with 221 cases of presidential drama.

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[13] It should be noted that there is no "universal" or "master" set of presidentially relevant events in the literature. Nonetheless, the events included in prior research share several characteristics. The episodes (1) are specific and sharply focused, (2) receive extensive and nonroutine coverage in the media, and (3) are "connected" to the president either in the role of initiator/reactor or in the more "personal" sense of a target or victim. Consequently, our method of combining the published event sets provides a reasonable approximation of such a list. In compiling this set, we have excluded those events involving the election or inauguration of the president. We have also updated the set to include events from the Reagan administration.

[14] As the description of approval-enhancing and approval-diminishing events presented in n. 9 emphasizes, we have relied upon the empirical results of prior research in classifying these events. Those events associated with international crises, foreign affairs, or the physical well-being of the president were classified as approval-enhancing; those events related to scandals and domestic unrest were classified as approval-diminishing.

Prior to reporting the results, it is important to note that we have imposed two a priori limitations on the analysis. First, as a consequence of the fact that we are in the early stages of our research program, we decided to ignore initially all poll periods that do not have a speech and/or a trip. Consequently, our data set is limited because we have, at this time, no information on four subsets of poll periods; that is, poll periods that contain neither a speech nor a trip in combination with any of the following event types: (a) no event, (b) approval-enhancing events, (c) approval-diminishing events, or (d) both approval-enhancing and approval-diminishing events.[15] Second, our decision to include only a portion of all poll periods in this phase of our analysis means that there are significant "time gaps" in the data set. To avoid ambiguous inferences about covariation, we have chosen to ignore the salient environmental variables (e.g., inflation, unemployment, battle deaths) until the time gaps have been filled.[16]

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[15] To see the logical possibilities consider a table that has four columns—no speech/no trip, speech only, trip only, speech and trip—and four rows—no event, approval-enhancing event only, approval-diminishing event only, and both approval-enhancing and approval-diminishing events. The information excluded from the analysis consists of the first column of this table.

From an empirical point of view these limitations are considerable. There are 221 poll periods from January 1953 through December 1986 in which there is either a speech, a trip, or a speech and a trip. During this period, a check of available Gallup poll documentation indicates that there were 573 polls. Consequently, in 39% of all poll periods presidents engaged in one of these two forms of political drama.

Given this data set, it is now possible to determine how much of the variance in changes in public support can be attributed to the various combinations of drama and associated events. To analyze these changes we employ a multiple regression model using a dummy variable for each of the nine combinations contained in Table 3.[17] The regression results are presented in Table 4.[18] As can be seen in Table 4, the overall goodness of fit indicate that the nine types of political drama account for 17% of the overall variance. There are at least two conclusions that can be drawn from the overall results. First, given the absence of the usual covariates, it is surprising that political drama is able to explain as much variance as it does. Second, given the previously discussed literature (e.g., Kernell, 1986; Ragsdale, 1984) *and* the limitations we have placed on the data set (i.e., looking only at poll periods with a speech or a trip), it is surprising that political drama does not have more of an impact.

No matter which cast one places on the overall goodness of fit, it is clear that the results in Table 4 offer a substantially different picture of the impact of political drama than is conveyed in Proposition 2. There are several noteworthy features in this regard. Of particular interest is the category of pure speeches (i.e., speeches made during periods in which there are no foreign trips and no salient approval-enhancing or approval-diminishing events). Table 4 shows that the average change in approval for the 92 instances of pure speeches is essentially zero. This result suggests that televised speeches and statements, in and of themselves, add little to the president's public standing. There are, however, three instances in which a televised speech is associated with a statistically significant change in popular support. First, televised speeches given when there is an approval-enhancing event during the poll period lead to a statistically significant increase of 4.00 rating points. Second, televised speeches that are delivered during a poll period in which there is an approval-diminishing event are associated with a statistically significant decrease of 2.50 rating points. Third, poll periods in which a speech is given in conjunction with a trip and an approval-enhancing event lead to a statistically significant increase of 4.17 rating points. The impact of foreign travel in its pure form is

[16] As a first step in this direction, we have expanded our consideration to all 16 types of political drama in the context of the Reagan administration (Ostrom and Simon, 1987).

[17] The regression results were obtained using a single dummy variable for each of the nine drama types and suppressing the constant term. The goodness-of-fit statistics were calculated separately following a procedure in Ostrom (1978).

[18] We have used a rather unconventional format for Table 4 to maintain comparability between the empirical results and the logical possibilities displayed in Table 3.

Table 4. The Impact of Political Drama, 1953–1987: A Regression Analysis

	Type of Drama		
Event Category	Speech No Trip	Trip No Speech	Speech and Trip
No accompanying event in poll period	0.24 .44 (92)	−0.74 .60 (42)	0.95 .87 (20)
Approval-enhancing event in poll period	4.00* .87 (20)	0.71 1.46 (7)	4.17* 1.58 (6)
Approval-diminishing event in poll period	−2.50* .79 (24)	−1.62 1.37 (8)	−1.00 2.74 (2)
$R^2 = .17$, $F = 5.28$*			

NOTES: The first entry in each cell is a regression coefficient that represents the average change in public support for that category. The second entry is the standard deviation of the regression coefficient. The numbers in parentheses are the number of cases that fall into each of the nine categories.

* $p < .01$.

similar to the category of pure speeches. The 42 instances of such travel produce an average change in approval of −0.74 rating points, a result that is statistically indistinguishable from zero. There is only one instance in which presidential trips are associated with a statistically significant change in presidential approval (i.e., the previously mentioned combination of a trip, a speech, and an approval-enhancing event).

Overall, there are two interesting findings represented in Table 4. First, in only two instances does political drama lead to a statistically significant increase in a president's popular support. Each of these instances is associated, either directly or coincidentally, with an associated or concurrent approval-enhancing event. Second, the most controllable forms of presidential drama—the pure speech and pure travel categories—have almost no discernible impact on presidential approval.

The observed impact of the pure speech category is particularly curious given the emphasis on the beneficial effects of this activity in the literature. Table 5 is designed to examine the pure speech category

Table 5. The Impact of Presidential Drama: The Case of Pure Speeches

	Average Approval Change		
	Speeches in Prime Time	Speeches Not in Prime Time	Total
Total	0.57 (61)	−0.42 (31)	0.24 (92)
President			
Eisenhower	−0.39 (18)	0.18 (11)	−0.17 (29)
Kennedy	1.00 (4)	−2.00 (3)	−0.29 (7)
Johnson	−1.00 (3)	−0.57 (7)	−0.70 (10)
Nixon	1.53 (13)	−1.20 (5)	0.78 (18)
Ford	3.00 (3)	2.00 (1)	2.75 (4)
Carter	−0.25 (8)	−2.00 (3)	−0.73 (11)
Reagan	1.17 (12)	5.00 (1)	1.46 (13)
Content			
Foreign policy	−0.35 (20)	−0.44 (18)	−0.39 (38)
War	1.60 (5)	0.00 (2)	1.14 (7)
Economic policy	1.15 (13)	−1.00 (2)	0.87 (15)
Domestic policy	0.07 (14)	−1.17 (6)	−0.30 (20)
Other	2.00 (9)	1.33 (3)	1.83 (12)
Time from Speech to Poll			
1–7 days	0.81 (26)	−0.22 (18)	0.38 (44)
8–14 days	1.56 (18)	−2.60 (5)	0.65 (23)
15–21 days	.00 (15)	.80 (5)	0.20 (20)
22+ days	−.50 (2)	−4.33 (3)	−2.80 (5)

NOTES: The entries represent the average change in public support measured in the poll periods immediately before and after the speech. The entries in parenthesis are the cell frequencies.

in further detail. Table 5 displays, first of all, the average change in approval for pure speeches delivered in prime time and those not delivered in prime time. It also examines, within each of these categories, average approval change by president, by the substantive content of the speech, and by time between the speech and the start of the polling period. In general, the results show that there are few substantial differences in the impact of pure speeches across administrations or policy domains. There are three instances worthy of comment, however. The first involves the time at which a speech was delivered. The average approval change associated with prime-time speeches is approximately one rating point higher than those speeches delivered in off hours (0.57 vs. −0.42). Second, prime-time speeches given within two weeks of the start of the next polling period have a substantially larger impact than do prime-time speeches that occur more than two weeks before a polling period or the non-prime-time speeches. While interesting, these differences do not undermine the conclusion that the impact of pure speeches is not very substantial. A third point of interest in Table 5 pertains to the Reagan administration. The average approval change for the 13 pure speeches given by Reagan is not substantially different than the averages of his predecessors; in spite of Reagan's extensive reliance on the prime-time format, the results do not suggest that he is more accomplished in deriving political benefits from his stints on the political stage.

Insofar as Proposition 2 is concerned, our analysis of presidential drama, in both pure and mixed forms, provides little evidence to support the proposition that such presidential activities exert a uniformly positive impact on public support. There are, however, a number of instances in which political drama does lead to a statistically significant change in presidential approval ratings. What is noteworthy, however, is that political drama is *not* uniformly approval-enhancing. Instead, Tables 4 and 5 indicate that the impact of political drama is more subtle, with its profits and liabilities dependent upon the prevailing political context.

PROPOSITION 3: THE EFFICACY OF POLITICAL DRAMA AS A PRESIDENTIAL STRATEGY

As noted previously, the alleged efficacy of political drama rests upon the president's ease of access to the political stage and his ability to exert control over the timing and, in many instances, the content of his messages. As a result, engaging in political drama is expected to cast the president in a positive light, trigger a rally effect, and thus increase his standing with the public. It is for these reasons that the conventional wisdom concludes that political drama is a strategy tailor-made for the modern president operating in the age of the mass media. Our analysis casts considerable doubt on this conclusion.

As can be seen in Table 4, the pure and mixed forms of drama do not exert a uniformly positive impact on public support. In fact, when the control for accompanying events is introduced, four of the nine drama types exert a negative impact on the change in popular support (pure trips and all forms of drama that are accompanied by approval-diminishing events). Further, of the three forms of drama that are most amenable to presidential control (i.e., the top row of Table 4), none produces a positive result that is statistically distinguishable from zero. Consideration of the pure speeches in Table 5 shows that there are no sizable or systematic differences when administrations, prior approval, and time from speech to the beginning of the poll period are taken into account.[19]

Finally, the Appendix provides some interesting information about the issue of presidential control. It displays the specific speech, trip, and event combinations from the three cells of Table 4 that are associated with a statistically significant change in approval. Recall that in Table 4 the significant and positive changes in approval are found in two categories: (1) speeches with approval-enhancing events and (2) a speech and trip with an approval-enhancing event. Inspection of the first category in the Appendix reveals that in very few instances is the event associated with the speech controllable by the president. Most are not only dependent upon actions over which the president has little control, but the speeches are primarily a reaction to the event. The second category associated with a positive change is quite small, and there are few if any generalizations that can be drawn. Overall, consideration of entries in the two categories suggests that the jumps in approval are not endogenous or presidentially generated. Rather, the occurrence of the episode depends to varying degrees upon an exogenous action as well. This is particularly true in such noteworthy cases as the Cuban missile crisis, the Mayaguez incident, and the seizure of the U.S. embassy in Iran. This is not to assert that the president is simply a passive beneficiary in such cases but to illustrate that the notion of control embedded in the conventional wisdom is, at best, overstated.

Proposition 3 has another implication as well. If certain types of political drama can lead to increases in approval, it stands to reason that political drama ought to enable the president to offset declines in approval. Consider the combination of a speech and an approval-diminishing event. In 16 of 24 instances, the speech failed to eliminate the negative reaction associated with the event. While it is difficult to say what the drop in approval would have been in the absence of the speech, it could be that the speech calls attention to the approval-diminishing event and thereby exacerbates the decrease in approval.

The consideration of these four subsets leads to the conclusion that while the use of television and foreign travel may be useful for the president concerned with influencing his public standing, they alone or in tandem are not all-purpose strategies guaranteed to halt declines or replenish sizable losses of public support.

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[19] We have undertaken a similar set of analyses for pure trips; the results are similar to those presented in Table 5. Since small cell sizes make any sort of statistical inference impossible, the results are not reported here.

Conclusion: Extending the Study of Political Drama

Realizing that this is the first step in a much longer journey, it is worth noting that the paper has accomplished several objectives. First, we have developed a complete universe for two of the three subsets of political drama. Second, we have provided an initial description of the conventional wisdom pertaining to speechmaking and international travel. Third, we have developed a methodology that can be employed to evaluate the efficacy of presidential drama. Finally, on the basis of the analysis presented in this paper, we have provided evidence that calls each of the three propositions into question.

Several implications flow from this analysis. First, our results show that significant changes in approval are confined to those categories of drama that are associated with an event. This calls into question the finding by Ragsdale (1984:980) that the significant impact of events is an artifact of failing to control for presidential speechmaking. Rather, our results suggest that it is the event rather than the speech that is responsible for triggering the rally effect. Second, Kernell's assertion that political drama can, in principle, serve a homeostatic function is not supported by our analysis. In particular, the results pertaining to pure speeches and pure trips show that these forms of drama are not sufficient for triggering a rally effect. This implies that engaging in drama is a limited strategy whose efficacy depends upon the occurrence of an event. A third implication follows. Our results suggest that grandiose rhetoric, image building, and other forms of "PR" are likely to be ineffective methods for restoring lost support. Given that the presidential performance poll has become an important mechanism for imposing accountability on the office (see especially Lowi, 1985; Crespi, 1980; Hodgson, 1980), this is reassuring. It suggests that the nature of this accountability is neither as superficial nor as easily manipulable as the public relations approach assumes.

Appendix: The Forms of Political Drama with a Significant Impact

SPEECH WITH APPROVAL-ENHANCING EVENT

Report on Bay of Pigs/Bay of Pigs (4/20/61)
Situation in Berlin/U.S.–Soviet tank confrontation in Berlin (11/11/61)
Missiles in Cuba/Cuban missile crisis (11/2/62)
Nuclear test ban/Death of JFK's newborn son (7/26/63)
Tax cut/Test ban (9/18/63)
End of JFK mourning period/JFK assassination (12/22/63)

Dominican Republic/Marines sent to Dominican Republic (5/2/65)
Panama Canal/LBJ undergoes surgery (9/24/65)
Vietnam/Bombing halt (10/31/68)
Vietnam/Draft lottery (5/14/69)
Cambodia/Troops to Cambodia (4/30/70)
Economy/Wage-price freeze (8/15/71)
Vietnam/Peace agreement (1/23/73)
Mayaguez/Mayaguez (5/14/75)
Iran hostage crisis/Hostage crisis (11/12/79)
U.S.–U.S.S.R. relations/Soviets invade Afghanistan (1/4/80)
Iran rescue/Attempted rescue of hostages (4/25/80)
Poland/Sanctions against U.S.S.R. (12/29/81)
Economy/Troops to Lebanon (10/13/82)
Korean airliner shot down by Soviets (9/5/83)

SPEECH AND TRIP WITH APPROVAL-ENHANCING EVENT

Defense/NATO conference/Minor stroke (11/57)
Report/Europe trip/Khrushchev visit (9/59)
Report/Paris summit/U-2 crisis (5/60)
Apollo 11/Far East tour/Apollo (7/69)
Mining Hanoi & Haiphong/SALT I signed in Moscow (5/8/72)
Lebanon and Grenada/Reagan visits Japan (10/27/83)

SPEECH WITH APPROVAL-DIMINISHING EVENT

Reelection/Montgomery bus boycott (2/29/56)
Little Rock/Desegregation conflict in Little Rock (9/24/57)
Meredith enters University of Mississippi (9/30/62)
University of Alabama enrollment conflict (6/11/63)
Mutual aid speech/Civil rights march in DC (8/23/63)
Civil rights/Trouble in Selma (3/15/65)
Viola Liuzzo/Selma (3/26/65)
Signing voting rights bill/Violence in Watts (8/16/65)
Domestic violence/Violence in major U.S. cities (7/27/67)
Pueblo/Tet offensive (1/26/68)
LBJ withdraws from race/King assassination (3/31/68)
Busing moratorium/ITT scandal (3/16/72)
Economy/McCord letter (3/29/73)
Resignation of Haldeman, etc./Watergate (4/30/73)
Economy/Watergate scandal (6/13/73)
Watergate/Watergate (8/15/73)
Energy/Watergate scandal (11/25/73)
Middle East agreement/Watergate scandal (1/17/74)
Watergate/Watergate (4/29/74)
Middle East crisis/Watergate scandal (5/28/74)
Economy/Watergate (7/25/74)

Nixon pardon/Watergate (9/8/74)
Energy/Three Mile Island (4/5/79)
Iran/Iran-Contra scandal (11/13/84)

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DEMOCRATIC INCUMBENTS AND THE 1984 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

A CASE STUDY

KURT C. SCHLICHTING

Abstract This article examines the advantages a single Democratic incumbent utilized to win reelection in 1984 despite an overwhelming victory by Ronald Reagan at the top of the ticket in the congressional district. The incumbent won reelection because of two types of ticket splitting: Republican-inclined voters who voted for Republican candidates for president and U.S. Senate and split to vote for the Democratic incumbent for Congress, and Democratic voters who supported Democratic candidates for U.S. Senate and Congress but split to vote for Ronald Reagan for president. Ticket splitting was found to be associated with basic political orientation—weak Republican and independent voters split in favor of the Democratic incumbent and were far less likely to vote a straight ticket for either party. Support for the Democratic incumbent was explained in nonideological terms and was based upon high recognition and favorability, constituent service, voting record, and personal familiarity. For the Republican challenger, who never achieved a high level of recognition (despite significant campaign expenditure), support came almost solely from the most partisan Republican members of the electorate and was based simply upon the party affiliation of the Republican challenger.

In 1984, despite one of the most one-sided presidential elections in American history, the Republicans gained only fourteen seats in the House of Representatives and lost two seats in the Senate. Almost all Democratic congressional incumbents who ran for reelection in 1984 won.

The focus of this research is on the reelection of one Democratic incumbent congressman and provides an opportunity to examine at the micro level the advantages that one Democratic incumbent utilized in 1984 to win reelection. The willingness of a significant number of

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voters to split their ticket proved decisive. The Democratic incumbent won reelection to Congress with 53% of the votes cast while Walter Mondale, the Democratic presidential candidate, received 36%. The likelihood of ticket splitting was found to be directly correlated with the strength of political affiliation and the high level of recognition and positive evaluation of the incumbent by almost all segments of the electorate. The incumbent congressman was also able to take advantage of the fact that a significant portion of the electorate had decided in favor of the incumbent before September 1984.

Since the 1950s a great deal of attention has been focused on the voting behavior of the American electorate, but the emphasis has been on voting in presidential elections. A recent major study of congressional elections by Goldenberg and Traugott (1984:6) points out the "predominantly presidential focus of virtually all large studies of elections until 1978." It is not until 1978 that the National Election Study (NES) conducted by the University of Michigan substituted congressional districts for counties as primary sampling units and began to include questions specific to the congressional elections.

The major limitation of the NES, the primary source for survey data on congressional elections, is that few interviews are conducted in any one congressional district. The Goldenberg and Traugott analysis focuses on types of congressional races: open seats, incumbent seats, incumbent–sure winners, incumbent-vulnerables, and not on any one congressional district. The authors analyze 86 contested races among the 108 congressional districts in the NES sample (1984). The survey data is drawn from the 1978 NES and consists of 1,843 interviews, an average of 21 interviews per district in the contested districts (N = 86).

The present study examines survey data from a single congressional district for the 1984 presidential election. The congressional district analyzed is located in a large midwestern state and consists of urban, suburban, and rural areas. Its other demographic characteristics mirror those of the state as a whole. The congressional district is one which was identified by both parties as "marginal" ("vulnerable" in Goldenberg and Traugott terminology) in 1984. The incumbent Democrat faced a strong challenge from a well-financed Republican. The Republican challenger spent over $450,000, while the incumbent's campaign expenditures exceeded $555,000.

Method

The primary data for this study comes from a postelection survey conducted one week after the presidential election in 1984. Interviewing took place from 12 to 15 November. The postelection survey included 600 completed telephone interviews and consisted of a stratified systematic sample. The cities and townships in the congressional district were divided into four areas, and within each a systematic sample was selected from computerized lists of all registered voters. Each of the four areas in the district was sampled in proportion to its contribution to the total votes cast in 1984.

Seven percent of the respondents indicated that they had not voted in the 1984 election; they were asked their vote intention and then the basic demographic questions. An additional 7% indicated that they could not remember for whom they had voted in the congressional election and were also not included in the analysis.

The analysis also examines data from a series of six preelection polls conducted in the congressional district. The first took place in February of 1984 and the last one week before the November 1984 election. Each of the preelection polls consisted of 600 completed interviews. The samples were selected systematically from a computerized list of all registered voters in the district. Townships in the district were sampled in proportion to their contribution to the 1982 total vote.

Ticket Splitting

For Democratic House incumbents to have enjoyed such electoral success in 1984 despite President Reagan's overwhelming Republican victory at the top of the ballot meant a great deal of ticket splitting occurred. A sizable portion of the electorate in districts where Democratic incumbents won reelection voted for Reagan for president and for the Democratic incumbent in the race for the U.S. Congress. Ornstein (1985:12) argues that in 1984 the Republicans attempted to "run a comprehensive party effort" which tried to "coordinate activities to a considerable degree and ran an expensive and party-based campaign to win seats in Congress." The coordinated effort was not successful.

The postelection survey asked respondents for whom they voted in the races for president, U.S. Senate, and U.S. Congress. Respondents can be divided into two categories: voters who were Democratically inclined—voting for two Democratic candidates for the three offices—and Republican-inclined voters who voted for two out of three Republican candidates.

Within each of these two major categories, almost equal thirds of the electorate voted either straight Republican or straight Democratic. Among Democratic-inclined voters, few split their tickets to vote for either the Republican Senate or House challengers. For Republican-inclined voters, less than 7% defected to vote for the Democratic Sen-

Table 1. Ticket Splitting, Postelection Survey, November 1984

	President	Senate	Congress	Percent
Democratic inclined voters				
Straight Democrat	D	D	D	28.6
Split—Democrat for Reagan	R	D	D	17.5
Split—Democrat for Republican Senate candidate	D	R	D	.8
Split—Democrat for Republican House challenger	D	D	R	.8
Republican inclined voters				
Straight Republican	R	R	R	31.5
Split—Republican for Mondale	D	R	R	.7
Split—Republican for Democrat Senate candidate	R	D	R	6.6
Split—Republican for Democrat House incumbent	R	R	D	13.6
Total *N*				487

ate candidate, and almost none voted for the Democratic presidential candidate (see Table 1).

The electoral success of this Democratic incumbent in 1984 was based upon two types of ticket splitting. The first consisted of voters who voted for Democratic candidates on the congressional ticket and for Ronald Reagan for president (17.5%). In this group, the fundamental orientation was to support Democratic candidates; however, the personal appeal of Ronald Reagan overcame basic party orientation. The first survey in February found that 73% of the electorate had a positive evaluation of Ronald Reagan and 62% rated the job he was doing as president as "excellent" or "pretty good." His high personal favorability and job rating did not change over the course of the entire campaign.

The second type of ticket splitters (13.6%) voted for Republican candidates for president and Senate and then defected and voted for the Democratic incumbent for Congress. Here, the personal popularity and appeal of the incumbent congressmen countered a fundamental Republican party orientation.

The probability of ticket splitting is directly correlated with basic political orientation. Those in the electorate with strong partisan orientations are the least likely to split. However, even among "strong" Republicans, 12% indicated they had voted for the Democratic incumbent at the congressional level (Table 2). The converse was not the

Table 2. Ticket Splitting and Political Orientation, Postelection Survey, November 1984

	Strong Dem	Weak Dem	Ind Lean Dem	Ind	Ind Lean Rep	Weak Rep	Strong Rep
Straight Dem	94%	60%	72%	19%	5%	3%	2%
Split—Dem for Reagan	2	29	17	31	22	16	9
Split—Rep for Dem Senate		2	6	3	8	10	12
Split—Rep for Dem House incumbent	2	4	4	22	19	22	12
Straight Rep	2	4	2	24	45	49	66
Total *N*	50	44	60	89	112	100	67

QUESTION: Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or what?

(If Democrat:) Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

(If Republican:) Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

(If independent:) Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?

case; few "strong" Democrats voted for the Republican congressional challenger. This illustrates one of the advantages an incumbent enjoys: the appeal of the incumbent was such that it was even capable of pulling away some of the strongest partisans of the other party.

The incumbent was more successful among voters whose Republican partisan orientation was more moderate—weak Republicans and independents leaning Republican. With these two groups, the proportion voting a straight party ticket declined to less than 50%. Almost one-fifth of each of these categories of voters split their tickets specifically in favor of the Democratic incumbent. This illustrates the ability of the Democratic incumbent to reach across basic party orientation. As Ornstein (1985:13) states, the 1984 voting "reflects less the ineptitude of the challenger than the impressive abilities of Democratic House incumbents to build powerful niches to withstand strong adverse tides." Part of that niche consisted of a successful appeal to those who had less than the strongest partisan ties to the Republican party and its candidate.

TICKET SPLITTING AND CANDIDATE DECISION TIME

The time at which the choice for Congress was made was a factor in the incumbent's reelection, and this also varied according to the type of ticket cast. Among those who voted a straight Democratic ticket, 61% indicated they had decided to vote for the Democratic incumbent congressional candidate before September 1984 (Table 3). In addition, 88% of this group responded that they had "never considered voting for" the Republican challenger. This segment of the electorate represented a solid base the Democratic incumbent used to secure reelection.

The two major groups of ticket splitters, Democratic voters who split and voted for Reagan for president (17.5%) and Republican voters who voted for the Democratic incumbent for Congress (13.6%), were divided between those who had decided to vote for the Democratic incumbent prior to September (35% and 39% respectively) and those who decided their vote within a week of the election (37% and 33%). Both groups of ticket splitters contained significant numbers of voters who decided to vote for the Democratic incumbent before the political season began.

REASONS FOR TICKET SPLITTING

Ticket splitters were asked directly why they voted for the Republican candidate for president and the Democratic candidate for Congress.

Table 3. Congressional Vote Decision Time and Ticket Splitting, Postelection Survey, November 1984

Decision Time	Straight Democrat	Split—Dem for Reagan	Split—Rep for Dem House Incumbent	Straight Republican
Right near	9%	18%	18%	25%
Week before	6	18	15	9
October	10	15	18	18
September	9	9	6	6
Before September	61	35	39	33
Can't remember/ don't know	5	5	4	9
Total *N*	139	85	66	153

QUESTION: When did you finally decide to vote for (Republican/Democrat)—right near election day, the week before, sometime in October, sometime in September or before that?

The most common responses were that they "vote for the individual" (40%) or that they "always split their ticket" (21%) (Table 4). Both of these responses suggest an absence of partisan loyalty among this segment of the electorate.

A second interpretation of those responses which suggest consistent ticket splitting from election to election is that the race for the two offices, president and Congress, are divorced from one another. Ladd has argued that "presidential and congressional voting are two distinct systems"; he further explains "the two-tier electoral system as Americans' liking for separation of powers and checks and balances . . . by ordaining divided party control" (1985:3).

Many responded to the question posed by focusing their explanation for ticket splitting on the congressional race. They felt no need to explain their vote for Reagan; rather, the need was to explain their simultaneous vote for the Democratic incumbent. A significant portion (19%) offered their favorable evaluation of the incumbent, personal acquaintance with the congressman or his office, or mentioned specific district services as reasons for their split voting for the congressional incumbent.

INCUMBENT RECOGNITION

One of the most powerful advantages that incumbent congressmen enjoy is a high level of recognition. Hinckley and others have argued

Table 4. Reasons for Ticket Splitting, Postelection Survey, November 1984

Reason	
Always vote for individual	40%
Always split ticket	21
For Democratic incumbent	19
For Ronald Reagan	5
Keep balance in Washington	7
Against Mondale	6
Miscellaneous	2
Total *N*	141

QUESTION: You voted it seems for Republican Ronald Reagan and Democrat (name Democratic incumbent). Most people in (state) this year voted for all Democrats or all Republicans. Why did you decide to split your ticket and vote for Republican Ronald Reagan and Democrat (name)?

that incumbents win reelection so often because they are well known and their opponents are comparatively unknown. "For a large number of House voters, essentially no choice is provided, one candidate is known the opponent is not. . . . House incumbents enjoy a strong margin of support, but they also enjoy the boon of fairly invisible challengers" (Hinckley, 1980:51).

The complicating factor for the challenger in congressional elections is the fact that incumbent congressmen are evaluated in very positive terms by the constituents of their districts.

The Democratic congressman in the congressional district being examined enjoyed both advantages described above. When the first poll was conducted in February 1984, 78% of the electorate could provide an evaluation, while only 9% had never heard of the Democratic incumbent. Most of the voters who provided an evaluation gave the incumbent a positive rating (58%), while only 19% indicated a negative evaluation. This positive evaluation remained stable throughout the campaign.

The position of the Republican challenger was much more disadvantageous. In February 1984 he was virtually unknown, and even with a substantial campaign effort on the part of the challenger, the last poll prior to election day found that 17% of the electorate had never heard of the Republican challenger, and a significant proportion of the electorate (42%) had not formed either a positive or negative evaluation of the candidate. The Republican challenger failed to reach the threshold of recognition necessary to engage the electorate sufficiently to make this particular congressional election a true contest between two candidates.

Further, the evaluation of the Democratic incumbent varied to a significant degree with the political orientation of the respondent. The negative evaluation of the Democratic incumbent was concentrated among the partisan Republicans ("strong" Republicans). When the two other Republican categories are examined ("weak Republican" and "Independent–lean Republican"), favorability changes dramatically. Only 34% of the strong Republicans provided a positive evaluation of the Democratic incumbent, but a majority of both the weak Republicans and the independents leaning Republican did. A majority of both of these groups reported voting for the Democratic incumbent, despite the fact that they described their fundamental political orientation as Republican. The partisan ties of these groups were not strong enough to counter their positive evaluation of the Democratic incumbent (see Table 5).

Goldberg and Traugott (1984:136) have argued that a voter's choice of candidates is "a composite of recognition and evaluation filtered through a voter's partisan political identification." In this congres-

Table 5. Recognition and Favorability by Political Orientation, Democratic Incumbent, Postelection Survey, November 1984

	Strong Dem	Weak Dem	Ind Lean Dem	Ind	Ind Lean Rep	Weak Rep	Strong Rep
Very favorable	26%	23%	21%	9%	8%	4%	12%
Favorable	56	66	62	58	44	56	30
Unfavorable	2	2	8	10	17	18	31
Very unfavorable	—	—	2	3	5	4	4
No opinion	11	9	7	18	24	18	27
Never heard	6	—	—	3	3	1	3
Total *N*	50	44	67	89	112	100	67

QUESTION: Now, I am going to read you a list of political figures and I would like you to tell me whether in general you have a very favorable, favorable, unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of each one. If you have no opinion or have never heard of someone, please say so.

sional election, the partisan identification of only the "strong Republicans" was sufficient enough to overcome the recognition and positive evaluation of the Democratic incumbent.

INCUMBENT SUPPORT AND CANDIDATE DECISION TIME

The time dimension in the decision-making process was another factor in the incumbent's favor. There was a significant difference between those who voted for the Democratic incumbent and those who voted for the Republican challenger in terms of when they made their choice between candidates. Slightly over half of those who voted for the Democratic incumbent indicated that they had decided to vote for the incumbent before September 1984 (Table 6). The conventional wisdom is that American political campaigns do not really begin until Labor Day, the first week in September. If that is the case, then even before the congressional campaign had begun, the Democratic incumbent had already obtained half of his eventual electoral support. The corresponding figure for the Republican challenger was 32%.

INCUMBENT SUPPORT AND OPPOSITION

The postelection survey included two open-ended questions which asked respondents why they voted for their candidate for Congress and

Table 6. Vote Decision Time and Congressional Candidate Preference, Postelection Survey, November 1984

Decision Time	Republican Challenger	Democrat Incumbent
Right near	25%	14%
Week before	14	11
October	18	12
September	7	8
Before September	32	50
Total *N*	228	314

QUESTION: When did you finally decide to vote for (Republican/Democrat)—right near election day, the week before, sometime in October, sometime in September or before that?

why they voted against the other candidate. The two factors cited most often as reasons for voting for the incumbent included constituent service (25%) and his record on various issues (26%) (see Table 7). In previous studies, constituent service had been identified as a most important reason for supporting a House incumbent at election time (Parker, 1981). This is an advantage that only an incumbent can enjoy.

Table 7. Reasons for Voting For and Against the Democratic Incumbent, Postelection Survey, November 1984

	Vote For	Vote Against
Constituent services	25%	—
Record/issues	26	29%
Personal qualities	12	24
Experience	12	8
Party	10	30
Campaign activity	6	—
Anti-Reagan	—	4
Miscellaneous	9	6
Total *N*	288	157

QUESTIONS: What was the main reason you voted for Democrat (name)/Republican (name)? What was the main reason you did not vote for Democrat (name)/Republican (name)?

Constituent service is at the heart of the election success of House incumbents and helps to explain the apparent contradiction between the general negative evaluation of Congress by the American public on the one hand, and the high positive evaluation of individual members of Congress by their constituents. The image of the services provided by the incumbent was entirely positive. Not one of the respondents who voted against the incumbent indicated that they did so because of poor or nonexistent constituent service.

Political affiliation was not identified as an important reason in voting for a Democratic incumbent: rather, the emphasis was placed on service, voting record, and personal favorability. It was not surprising that many Democratic incumbents played down their party affiliation in the 1984 election. With some incumbents, it was difficult to find the word "Democrat" anywhere in their campaign literature or media advertising.

The reasons for voting against the incumbent focused on his record, negative personal qualities, and party affiliation. Party was not an important reason for voting for the Democratic incumbent but remained a reason for voting against him.

The comparative importance of the various reasons for voting for the Democratic incumbent varied by category of voter. For the two groups of ticket splitters, party declined sharply in salience. For the Democratically inclined voters who split to vote for Ronald Reagan, the most important reason for supporting the Democratic incumbent candidate for Congress was his voting record (32%). With this group, support was based upon an ideological affinity with the positions taken by the congressmen while in office. Constituent service (22%) was of less importance.

Individuals who voted Republican for both president and Senate and defected at the House level to support the Democratic incumbent identified service to the district as paramount in importance. Their defection to the Democratic incumbent is explained in nonideological terms. Constituent service provided Republican-oriented voters with a rationale for their defection.

For the Republican challenger, support was based primarily upon party (38%) and opposition, on a personal basis, to the Democratic incumbent (22%) (see Table 8). Issues played a very small part in either the support for or the opposition to the Republican challenger. The reason most often cited for not voting for the Republican challenger was this lack of recognition (41%). As the earlier data pointed out, the Republican candidate never achieved districtwide recognition of over 51%. It is also significant that "lack of experience" was mentioned by 12% of the respondents as a reason for not voting for the challenger to the Democratic House incumbent (Table 8). "Lack of experience" for

Table 8. Reasons for Voting For and Against the Republican Challenger, Postelection Survey, November 1984

	Vote For	Vote Against
Party	38%	11%
Personal qualities	20	22
Lack of experience	—	12
Issues	10	8
Lack of recognition	—	41
Support Reagan in Congress	7	—
Anti-Democratic incumbent	22	—
Miscellaneous	3	6
Total *N*	190	219

QUESTIONS: What was the main reason you voted for Democrat (name)/Republican (name)? What was the main reason you did not vote for Democrat (name)/Republican (name)?

the challenger is the reverse side of incumbency. Incumbents of both parties can and do emphasize their "experience" in reelection campaigns. It is difficult for the challenger to counter this argument because, except on rare occasions, he or she does not have legislative experience in Washington.

Very few of those who voted for the Republican congressional candidate identified support for Ronald Reagan as the primary reason for doing so. As Ornstein (1985) argues, the Republicans in 1984 were not successful in linking the reelection of an extremely popular Republican president with voting for Republican candidates for Congress who would in turn support the president. This theme proved to have very little appeal in this congressional district.

The straight Republican voters who provided the Republican challenger with most of his electoral support offer party as the primary reason for their vote choice. A significant number of straight Republican voters (48%) could not provide an opinion of the Republican candidate or had never heard of him. Therefore, the only reason for voting for the challenger was that he was the candidate of the Republican party. The second most important factor with these straight ticket voters was their negative attitude toward the Democratic incumbent which was phrased in very individual terms and not couched in opposition to the incumbent's party or record on particular issues. They represented the hard-core opposition to the incumbent evident in the first poll in February 1984.

In an election with a relatively unknown Republican challenger to a popular Democratic candidate, the only viable reasons for not voting for the incumbent were strong partisan Republican loyalties or personal animosity toward the Democratic incumbent. The combination of these two factors was not enough to unseat the current officeholder.

Multivariate Analysis

In order to assess the relationship between vote for the Democratic incumbent and the various independent variables examined, a logistic regression analysis was performed.

Favorability rating and political orientation were the two independent variables with the highest coefficients relative to their standard errors. The high recognition of the incumbent combined with positive evaluations were clearly factors which explain votes for the incumbent. The first two variables support Goldenberg and Traugott's hypothesis that vote choice is a composite of recognition and favorability filtered through a voter's political identification (see Table 9).

Personal contact, the third significant variable, is an additional com-

Table 9. Logistic Regression Analysis: Dependent Variable = Vote for Democratic Incumbent

Independent Variable	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	Coeff./S.E.
Favorability (incumbent)	−.74	.11	−6.67
Party	−.28	.05	−5.71
Time	−.01	.05	.11
Record	4.65	4.93	.94
Constituent services	4.47	5.69	.78
Personal contact	1.37	.53	2.61
Constant	7.98		
Degrees of freedom	460		

CODING: *vote for incumbent:* 1 = incumbent, 0 = not for incumbent; *favorability:* 1 = very favorable, 2 = favorable, 3 = no opinion, 4 = unfavorable, 5 = very unfavorable; *party:* 1 = strong Democrat, 2 = weak Democrat, 3 = independent—lean Democrat, 4 = independent, 5 = independent—lean Republican, 6 = weak Republican, 7 = strong Republican; *time:* 1 = right near, 2 = week before, 3 = October, 4 = September, 5 = before September; *record:* 1 = mention record, 0 = not mention; *constituent service:* 1 = mention constituent service, 0 = not mention; *personal contact:* 1 = mention contact with incumbent, 0 = not mention contact.

ponent of incumbent strength. Recognition for this segment of the electorate is more than simply knowing the name of their incumbent representative. Respondents indicated that they had personally met the incumbent, dealt with the incumbent's office, or had family members and friends who had. This form of personal interaction builds and sustains the overall favorability of the incumbent.

The logistic regression analysis supports the hypothesis that voting for an incumbent is primarily associated with recognition, party identification, and positive personal interaction. Incumbents with high personal recognition and favorability are formidable regardless of the presidential candidates at the top of the ticket.

Summary

The incumbent won reelection because major segments of the electorate split their tickets. Ticket splitting was correlated with basic political orientation. Weak Republican and independent voters split in favor of the Democratic incumbent and were far less likely to vote a straight ticket for either party.

The postelection poll found that 50% of those who voted for the Democratic incumbent indicated they had decided to support their candidate before September. This provided the incumbent with a sizable base which was secured before the most crucial phase of the campaign for Congress began in September.

Support for the Democratic incumbent was explained in nonparty terms: constituent service, voting record, and position on various issues. The first two sources of support are usually only available to an incumbent. Party was not offered as a reason for voting for the incumbent, but it was the most significant factor used to explain voting for the Republican challenger. With a Republican candidate who remained unknown to a large part of the electorate, the major sources of support were party affiliation and personal animosity toward the Democratic incumbent. The combination of these two factors were not sufficient to defeat the current officeholder, despite the success of Ronald Reagan at the top of the Republican ticket.

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DETERMINANTS OF PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT AIDS

HORST STIPP AND
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Abstract Findings from analyses presented in this paper, using data from a Roper survey, suggest that the role of attitudes toward homosexuals should be at the center of future explorations of the relationship between the media coverage of AIDS and public opinion. While the available data are limited, our analyses raise the possibility that anti-gay attitudes constrain the ability of the media to effectively communicate information about risk factors and how the disease is transmitted. Researchers need to explore the possibility that anti-gay attitudes stand between media information and public knowledge and public opinion.

According to Singer, Rogers, and Corcoran (1987), the first U.S. poll on AIDS was conducted in June 1983. Since then, polls on AIDS and issues related to the epidemic have become increasingly frequent. Surveys have explored awareness, perceived importance of AIDS as a national issue, knowledge about transmission routes and affected groups, attitudes toward people with AIDS, opinions about policy issues such as spending, testing, and quarantine, and behavior in response to AIDS and its perceived risks, including precautions taken and changes in sexual practices.

Researchers have discussed these poll findings primarily in the context of agenda-setting models, looking at the media's impact on the public's perception of the issue. This is true of Singer, Rogers, and Corcoran (1987) and, as their title suggests, of Dearing, Rogers, and Fei's paper "The agenda-setting process for the issue of AIDS" (1988). However, the latter authors do not find that "traditional agenda-setting" models explain the processes they found in their analysis.

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Contrasting San Francisco—where AIDS was a major topic in most local media before 1983—with the rest of the U.S., Dearing, Rogers, and Fei think that the politically active gay community in San Francisco helped set the agenda for the media, whereas in the rest of the country the "traditional" media-to-public flow prevailed. Their analysis shows that the attitudes of those in the media toward the primary victims of the disease—homosexual men—were the main determinants of media attention during the early years of the epidemic.[1]

Findings from a survey by the Roper Organization that we are reporting here suggest that attitudes about homosexuals also play an important role in determining the public's reaction to media coverage. Even though the available data leave much to be desired—Roper's questions were not designed to address this topic, and only cross-sectional data are available—they raise the possibility that anti-gay attitudes constrain the ability of the media to effectively communicate information about risk factors and how the disease is transmitted. If true, this finding is important, for it suggests that AIDS education programs and the public debate about AIDS need to address anti-gay attitudes along with knowledge about transmission.

A July 1987 survey by the Roper Organization contained a number of questions about AIDS (nationwide representative sample, $N = 1{,}997$). As we were doing research on the influence of the media on the public's knowledge about AIDS, we were particularly interested in a question that was phrased as an attitude question but which seemed to be suitable as a substitute measure of beliefs about AIDS transmission (see Table 1).

Responses to these questions were quite similar to those from a set of straightforward transmission knowledge questions in a National Health Interview Survey conducted a few months after the Roper survey, which found, for example, that 30% thought it was "very likely," "somewhat likely," or "somewhat unlikely" that "a person will get the AIDS virus from . . . shaking hands with or touching someone who has AIDS"; 64% thought it "very uniikely" or "definitely not possible."[2]

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[1] According to Shilts (1987), the *San Francisco Chronicle* hired an openly gay reporter to cover issues of interest to their homosexual readers. In contrast, the *New York Times*—published in the city that had half of the nation's AIDS cases during the first couple of years—did not consider homosexual concerns "fit to print" at that time. Shilts's assertion is supported by content analyses of the *Times*'s coverage by Baker (1986) and Dearing, Rogers, and Fei (1988).

[2] The survey, published by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) in January 1988, was conducted in September 1987, $N = 3{,}098$ adults, personal interviews. Two more recent NCHS surveys both found small increases in accurate beliefs about casual transmission (Dawson, Cynamon, and Fitti, 1988; Dawson and Thornberry, 1988). A poll by Gallup in October 1987 produced comparable results (The Gallup Poll, November 26, 1987).

Table 1. Attitudes Toward AIDS Transmission, July 1987

"People feel differently about having contact with a person who has AIDS. For each of the things on this list would you tell me whether it is or is not something you would be willing to do?" (Card)

	Would Not Do	*Depends*	*Would Do*
Shake hands with someone who has AIDS	36%	9	50
Work alongside someone with AIDS	44%	12	38
Send your children to school with a child who had AIDS	48%	11	33
Help take care of an AIDS patient	52%	18	24
Kiss someone on the cheek who has AIDS	71%	6	17
Eat in a restaurant where you knew a kitchen worker had AIDS	74%	6	14

SOURCE: The Roper Organization.

The levels of risk perceived according to those findings are similar to those in the Roper data, even though they do not fully agree with the "would not do" responses to those questions—which is not surprising considering the differences in question wording. But both results fully agree that shaking hands with a person with AIDS is considered least risky; kissing such a person on the cheek or eating where a kitchen worker or cook has AIDS is considered most risky. The rank order of responses to the items common to both surveys is identical. Both findings also agree in that they indicate an enormous amount of misinformation.

AIDS researchers have been reporting for several years now that AIDS is spread through sexual intercourse, contact with contaminated blood (through dirty needles or, increasingly rarely, through blood transfusions), and birth to an infected mother. Transmission through other routes ("casual contact," health care work with protection, mosquitoes) or through unknown routes among specific kinds of people (Haitians) has been ruled out with increasing certainty.[3] This has apparently produced a slow trend toward better knowledge (Singer, Rogers, and Corcoran, 1987). Indeed, in polls, very few respondents profess ignorance about transmission of the virus and nearly everybody knows about the dangers of sexual and blood contact. However, almost half of respondents, all those who did *not* say "very unlikely" or "definitely not possible" to the items listed above, expressed clearly inaccurate beliefs about AIDS (or HIV virus) transmission.

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[3] Most recently, the Centers for Disease Control reported that the number of cases with "unknown" risk factors was much smaller than previously reported and that cases that could be further investigated all pointed to the familiar risk factors, ruling out other transmission routes (*New York Times*, 4 March 1988). At the same time, a book by sex therapists W. Masters and V. Johnson (with R. Kolodny) discussed the "theoretical possibility" of "catching AIDS from a toilet seat." Press reports pointed out that the

Since AIDS is a complex disease and there are still conflicting reports about transmission routes, one might argue that it is difficult for many people to absorb the facts about AIDS. Further, less sexually active (e.g., older) people might not be particularly interested in this topic. (Singer, Rogers, and Corcoran, 1987, makes both these points.) One might, therefore, expect variables such as media exposure, educational attainment, and age to predict responses to poll questions about AIDS transmission.

In our analysis of the correlates of the responses to the Roper question we were able to look at education, sex, and age; data on media exposure were not available in this survey. However, since reading newspapers and newsmagazines is related to educational attainment, the education measure might be seen as a rough substitute measure for exposure to facts about AIDS. Because education might measure people's exposure to as well as ability to comprehend information about AIDS, we expected it to be the best predictor. We also included an attitude measure on discrimination against homosexuals that found 65% of the respondents in favor of equal treatment in employment and housing; 23% said they wanted discrimination to be legal, and 12% were classified "don't knows."[4] This question preceded the questions about AIDS in Roper's survey. We hypothesized that the responses might be related to opinions about AIDS and its transmission, since polls have shown that the public identifies homosexuals as the primary victims of the disease.

For the purposes of our analysis, we combined the six items measur-

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authors do not have any evidence that such infections occurred. Surgeon General Koop called their work "irresponsible" (*New York Times*, 6 and 8 March 1988; *Newsweek*, 14 March 1988; *USA Today*, 15 March 1988; *Time*, 21 March 1988).

[4] "Some time ago, the citizens of Miami voted to repeal a county ordinance that banned discrimination in employment and housing based on a person's sexual preferences. The ordinance essentially meant that someone who is homosexual could not be kept from holding a particular job or living in any type of housing simply because he or she is homosexual. Which of these two statements best describes how you feel about the law and discrimination against homosexuals?" (Card) "a. Homosexuals should be guaranteed equal treatment under the law in jobs and housing. b. It should be *legal* to keep people out of jobs and housing if they are homosexuals."

ing beliefs about AIDS transmission described above into a summative scale, where a higher score represents greater willingness to have contact with people with AIDS. (Responses to the individual items were coded as "would do" = 1, "depends" or "would not do" = 0.) A principal-components analysis confirmed that these items were unidimensional (eigenvalue = 3.5), and alpha for the scale was .85. The resulting index of "perceived risks" ranged from 0 to 6, with a mean of 1.9 and standard deviation 2.1. This index is the dependent variable for the analyses that follow.

Findings

Attitude toward gay rights, not education, was the best individual predictor of the index—those who believe discrimination against homosexuals should be legal would go to much greater lengths to avoid people with AIDS (r = .33). Less-educated respondents also scored lower on the perceived risks index (r = .20). Sex and age were weakly associated with the index. Thus, Roper's data provided little support for the hypothesis that older, less sexually active people would be less well informed about AIDS. As we expected, education was a significant predictor of knowledge about AIDS transmission, but it accounted for considerably less variance in the index than attitudes toward gay rights.

We considered several reasons why these two measures, attitudes toward gay rights and the index of perceived risks, might be related. It may be that the index is a measure of social distance rather than a measure of beliefs about AIDS transmission and we merely discovered that people who don't want to have anything to do with gays—not even work near them—are the same kinds of people who favor discriminating against gays in jobs and housing. We cannot rule out this possibility using Roper's data. However, if the index does measure perceived risks, this finding could mean that anti-gay sentiments limit people's acceptance of the facts about AIDS transmission. We conducted several analyses that are consistent with that hypothesis.

First, we considered the possibility that the perceptions measured by the Roper index affect attitudes toward gay rights, rather than the other way around. According to this model, many people believe it's easy to get AIDS—by shaking hands or working close to someone who has it—and since they are afraid of catching AIDS, they favor some extreme responses to those most likely to infect them. If this were true, we would expect anti-gay sentiment among the general public to be on the rise since the discovery of AIDS. This is not so; public opinion is now slightly more pro-gay, with 65% favoring equal treatment for homosexuals in July 1987, versus 57% when Roper asked the same question in July 1978. Other poll data show a similar trend.

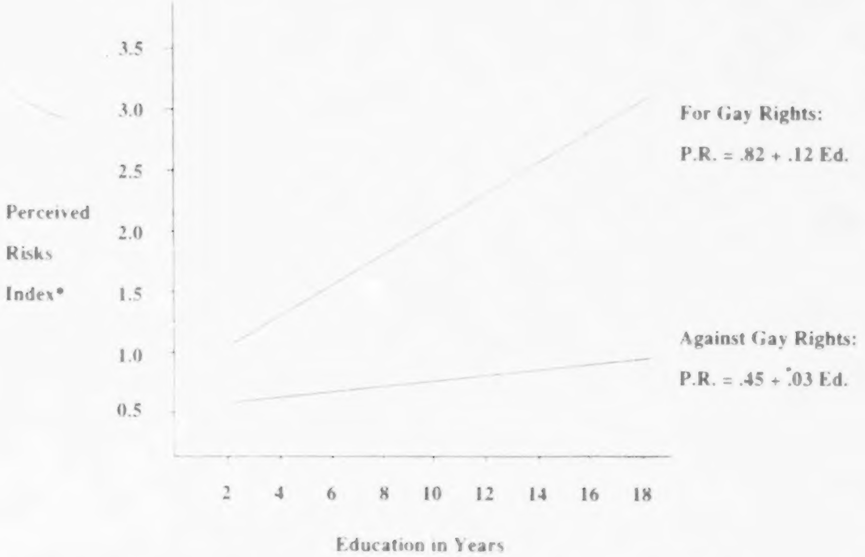
A second possibility is that attitudes toward gay rights and perceived risks are related because they stem from a common cause, such as educational attainment. According to this model, better-educated people are both more likely to be tolerant toward gays and more likely to be exposed to and correctly grasp facts about AIDS transmission. If this were true, the observed association between gay rights attitude and perceived risks would attenuate when education was controlled. This did not occur; controlling for education yielded a partial correlation of .31 between gay rights attitude and the avoidance index, compared to .33 when education was uncontrolled.

Finally, we tested the possibility that people with prior prejudice against gays are indeed less responsive to media information about the low risks of casual contact than people without such prejudice. The best test of this causal model would be a field experiment in which people with different prior attitudes toward gays were exposed to AIDS information campaigns. Roper's data, however, are cross-sectional and contain no measure of media exposure, so a rigorous direct test of our hypothesis is not possible. We can only approximate such a test by allowing education, presumably an indicator of access to and comprehension of information, to serve as a rough proxy measure of media exposure. If anti-gay attitudes limit one's ability to assimilate information about AIDS transmission, we would expect media exposure to be less strongly related to perceived risks among people opposed to gay rights than among those who support gay rights. The same interaction, in attenuated form, should exist for the joint effects of education and anti-gay sentiment.

We tested this hypothesis by estimating the following interactive regression model:

$$I = .45 + .37b_1 + .03b_2 + .09b_3,$$

where I is the perceived risks index, b_1 is a dummy variable representing attitudes toward gay rights (0 = against, 1 = for gay rights), b_2 is years of education, and b_3 represents the product of the gay rights opinion and education measures (the interaction term). As we expected, the interactive term is significant ($t = 2.7$, $p = .007$). Among those who support gay rights, each additional year of education adds an average of .12 to the index. Education makes considerably less difference among those who are opposed to gay rights, with each additional year adding only .03 (see Figure 1). Thus, our data are consistent with the hypothesis that people with anti-gay attitudes are less responsive to information about AIDS.



* High values represent greater willingness to have contact with people with AIDS.

Figure 1. Determinants of Perceived Risks: Interaction Between Gay Rights Attitude and Education (Best-Fitting Linear Regressions)

Discussion

We have reported rather limited data on an aspect of the AIDS issue that previous investigations have not considered: the possibility that anti-gay attitudes foster exaggerated beliefs about AIDS transmission and prevent accurate information in the media from being accepted by substantial proportions of the population.

We hope this paper stirs researchers' interest in this issue and prompts them to undertake the kinds of investigation necessary to establish whether, or to what extent, the hypotheses presented here are accurate. Since our interpretation is based on the assumption that Roper's attitude items really measured perceived risks, the analysis first needs to be repeated with items which directly measure transmission beliefs. (One researcher recently told us that she has done that and replicated our findings.)[5] Comprehensive studies should look at awareness, beliefs about transmission, media exposure, and opinions about such issues as HIV testing and treatment of AIDS victims. They should also address possibly relevant attitudinal factors—feelings and assumptions about homosexuals, as well as the other major groups of AIDS victims, IV drug users and members of ethnic minorities.[6]

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[5] At the 1988 meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, discussant Laurie Bauman reported that she had replicated our finding with transmission knowledge questions among a sample of Bronx, New York, high school students. The data were obtained very recently, and additional analysis is planned (personal communication). At the same session, George Gallup, Jr., reported data from a new Gallup poll that found evangelicals are more likely to believe that AIDS is transmitted casually than other population groups—consistent with our hypothesis that preexisting attitudes limit the effects of AIDS information and education (Gallup Report nos. 268/269, 1988).

The knowledge to be gained from such efforts has some significant consequences. In the first place, we may find that AIDS education campaigns need to address prejudicial attitudes in order to effectively reach their audiences. The same is true of campaigns by business corporations that aim at educating their workers about AIDS in the workplace. We might find that the goals of such campaigns—accurately informing the public about protective measures and avoiding disruptions at the workplace—cannot be achieved without dispelling inaccurate assumptions about victim groups. Moreover, the processes we are talking about have important implications for policy issues such as quarantine, mandatory testing, policies regarding HIV-infected schoolchildren, and also the care of people with AIDS. The debate over these issues might become more rational, and policy decisions more effective, if justified concerns and unfounded fears are clearly separated. Public opinion and attitudinal research may be able to make significant contributions toward those goals.

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6. Such research should also look for explanations for a link between attitudes toward gays and beliefs about AIDS transmission. We found that there are no thorough empirical studies of prejudice against homosexuals in the literature. (A provocative analysis by British sociologist J. Weeks [1985] suggests a link between "catching AIDS" and "catching homosexuality" in the minds of those who express anti-gay feelings. However, his empirical data are limited.)

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THE POLLS—A Review

QUESTION WORDING AND REPORTS OF SURVEY RESULTS: THE CASE OF LOUIS HARRIS AND ASSOCIATES AND AETNA LIFE AND CASUALTY

JON A. KROSNICK

It is now well known that reports of attitudes in surveys are subject to a host of response effects due to question formulation. Even apparently insignificant changes in question wording, form, or context can at times dramatically change the proportions of respondents expressing particular attitudes (see, e.g., Schuman and Presser, 1981). Thus, it seems clear that marginal distributions of responses to attitude measures are not perfect reflections of the distribution of opinion on some issue in a given population. Nonetheless, there are strong demands by policymakers and issue advocates to report marginals as a basis for assessing the public's will on policy matters. Taken together, these realities suggest that, when reporting marginal distributions of responses to attitude questions, survey researchers should report findings using the exact wordings of the questions that were asked (see, e.g., Schuman, 1986). This article describes a recent case in which this was not done.

During September and October of 1986, Louis Harris and Associates conducted a national survey on public attitudes toward the civil justice system and tort law reform (Taylor, Kagay, and Leichenko, 1987). The survey was commissioned by the Aetna Life and Casualty, an insurance company that is often involved in civil litigation and that favors changes in some regulations governing civil lawsuits. The questions asked in the survey addressed topics ranging from citizens' perceptions of current problems with the civil justice system to citizens' attitudes toward proposed changes in the system.

Some results of the survey were reported in an article in the *New York Times* on 7 March 1987 (Newton, 1987). The survey was characterized as indicating that although the public was satisfied with some aspects of the civil justice system, it was dissatisfied with others and favored many reforms. Most importantly, spokesmen from Aetna, the

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Tort Reform Institute, and the Insurance Information Institute were quoted as saying that the poll demonstrates "strong public support" for reforms currently being advocated by these organizations. This claim was presumably based upon the results of nine questions in the survey that measured respondents' attitudes toward a series of proposed changes in the civil justice system.

Four of the six items specifically described in the *New York Times* article were from this set of nine items on proposed changes. These descriptions described levels of public approval for the proposed changes using the words "favor," "support," and "allow" as follows: "Sixty-six percent [of respondents] said they would favor a limit . . ."; "78 percent supported restricting . . ."; "A majority of those polled said they would support limiting . . ."; "Three-quarters of the respondents also said they would allow judges to tell . . ." The summary statements regarding the results said they showed "broad public *support* for changes in the civil justice system" and that the poll's findings "reflected the public's *demand* for reform" (emphasis added).

The findings of the survey were characterized similarly in a press release produced by Aetna and in the Harris report summarizing the survey's findings. For example, the press release began, "An overwhelming majority of Americans support a number of specific reforms to improve the nation's civil justice system." It said as well that "large majorities [of Americans] agree that specific reforms are necessary," that "the public supports many proposed changes in the system," and that "when asked about specific problems in the system, respondents expressed very strong support for changes." Similarly, the Harris report said that "large majorities of Americans support many significant reforms to the civil justice system" (p. 6). In fact, the words "favor" and "support" were used throughout the Harris report to summarize public attitudes toward proposed changes in the civil justice system.

These characterizations of the survey results are questionable for two reasons. First, the questions asked respondents how *acceptable* respondents found each of the proposed changes: respondents indicated whether each proposed change was very acceptable, somewhat acceptable, not too acceptable, or not at all acceptable. But instead of describing the percentages of respondents who found each proposed change acceptable, the *New York Times* and the Aetna press release descriptions claimed to report the proportions of respondents who *favored*, *supported*, *agreed with*, or *would allow* each of them. And the Harris report offered conclusions about the proportions of Americans who supported and favored the changes. Because even apparently slight changes in attitude question wording can sometimes produce large changes in the distributions of responses to them, the proportion of people who reported finding a proposed change acceptable might be different from the proportion who would have said they favored, supported, agreed with, or would allow each proposed change.

Perhaps even more questionable than this word substitution is the way the response marginals were integrated to generate the proportions of respondents who supposedly favored, supported, agreed with, or would allow each change. In all reports and summaries, this was done by combining the proportions of respondents who said they found each proposed change "very acceptable" or "somewhat acceptable." It is remarkable that items where a large proportion of respondents said "somewhat acceptable" were characterized as indicating "very strong support" for the proposed changes.

These procedures probably produced inappropriate summaries of the relevant survey results. The word *acceptable* is a relatively mild word in comparison to *favor* or *support;* many more people may find a given proposed change acceptable than would favor or support it. Therefore, the use of these latter terms may have led to the appearance of inappropriately high levels of public endorsement. However, it is impossible to be certain that any given survey question wording change would have produced different results without conducting an experimental comparison.

In order to explore whether using the words "favor" or "support" might have produced lower levels of apparent public endorsement of the proposed changes in the civil justice system, a small-scale, informal experiment was conducted. Residents of a variety of suburbs of Columbus, Ohio, were contacted by telephone through a random digit dialing procedure during May 1988.[1] The person who answered the phone was asked whether he or she was willing to be interviewed. If not, the phone call was terminated and a new number was dialed. Two interviewers conducted the phone calls; their refusal rate was 55.0%, yielding a total sample of 60 people who completed interviews.

Respondents who agreed to be interviewed were first asked the first six questions of the Harris/Aetna survey, just as they had been asked by Harris in the original survey. Respondents were then asked one of three versions of the nine questions in the Harris survey that measured attitudes toward proposed changes in the civil justice system. One third of respondents were asked the "proposed changes" questions in exactly the same form in which they appeared in the original Harris/Aetna survey. These questions were introduced as follows:

> I will now read some possible changes that might be made to the civil justice system in this country. For each, please tell me how acceptable it

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[1] This was accomplished as follows. A number of three-digit exchanges were selected from the Columbus area telephone directory, and four-digit combinations were generated using a random number table in order to complete the phone numbers to be dialed.

Table 1. Percent of Respondents Choosing One of the Two Most Favorable Response Options

Item	Question Form			Statistical Significance of Difference
	Very or Somewhat Acceptable	Strongly or Somewhat Support	Strongly or Somewhat Favor	
1. Requiring injured persons who bring a lawsuit and then lose to pay the lawyer's fees and expenses of the person sued.	70%	47%	65%	.035
2. Having the judge give the jurors specific guidelines about how much in damages should be awarded in cases of a particular type.	70%	37%	90%	.006
3. Placing a "cap" or upper limit of $250,000 on the amount of money that could be awarded for "pain and suffering" and other noneconomic damages which are sometimes awarded in addition to economic damages.	90%	27%	70%	.001
4. Changing the law so that punitive damages, which are awarded on top of other damages to punish defendants, could only be awarded when the defendant's behavior was flagrantly negligent and malicious.	85%	47%	60%	.262
5. Requiring a "sliding fee" for a plaintiff's lawyer, so that, as the dollar size of a case goes up, the amount of money that the lawyer gets also goes up, but not as fast as when the lawyer gets a fixed percentage of the damages.	70%	40%	70%	.038

6. After the jury has decided a lawsuit, having the judge—instead of the jury—set the amount of damages awarded.	60%	17%	68%	.036
7. Requiring a judge to reduce the amount of damages that a jury awards by subtracting the amount of compensation that the victim already has received from health insurance, Workers' Compensation, or other sources, so that the plaintiff does not get compensation twice over.	80%	69%	85%	.819
8. Sometimes two defendants are sued together and lose, and one of them can't pay the damages. In many states, the defendant who can pay is then required to pay all the damages, even if his responsibility for the accident was minor. Some people want to change this, so that defendants would pay only their own share, even if this means that the injured party would receive less in damages than the court awarded.	79%	50%	90%	.022
9. Under the law in most states now, manufacturers are responsible for the products they make. So, if a customer is injured by using a defective product, then the customer can sue the manufacturer for damages—even if the manufacturer was not careless or negligent. Some people want to change this, so that a manufacturer would have to be careless or negligent before they could be held responsible for an injury resulting from their product.	75%	73%	60%	.487
Average	75%	45%	73%	

> would be to you personally—very acceptable, somewhat acceptable, not too acceptable, or not acceptable at all. You might think of these as changes that could affect you directly if you are involved in a civil lawsuit.

Another third of respondents were asked instead whether they would "strongly favor," "somewhat favor," "favor a little," or "not favor at all" each proposed change. And the final third of respondents were asked whether they would "strongly support," "somewhat support," "support a little," or "not support at all" each proposed change. Which form of these questions each respondent received was determined randomly.

The results of this informal experiment were in part consistent with intuition and in part surprising (see Table 1). As expected, the response alternative wording variations had statistically significant effects ($p <$ .04) on marginal distributions for six of the nine items, and the other three items showed similar trends. Also as expected, more respondents said they found the proposed changes acceptable than said they supported them. For example, 60% of the respondents who were asked the "acceptability" questions said "very acceptable" or "somewhat acceptable" in response to "After a jury has decided a lawsuit, having the judge—instead of the jury—set the amount of the damages." In contrast, only 17% of the respondents who were asked the "support" questions said "strongly support" or "somewhat support" in response to this item, a difference of 43%. An average (mean computed across the nine items) of 75% of respondents chose one of the two most positive response alternatives when the "acceptability" questions were asked, in comparison to only 45% when the "support" questions were asked, a difference of 30%. Thus, many fewer respondents expressed support for the proposed changes than said they would find them acceptable.

However, contrary to expectations, the proportion of respondents who said they strongly or somewhat favored each proposed change was generally quite comparable to the proportion saying they found it very or somewhat acceptable. Averaged across the nine items, 73% of respondents chose the two most positive response options when asked the "favor" questions, in comparison to 75% doing so when asked the "acceptability" questions. A similar result is obtained when only the single most positive response option is considered: 35% versus 31%, respectively. Thus, it seems that comparable results may have been obtained in the Harris survey had respondents been asked about the degree to which they favored each proposed change instead of being asked how acceptable they found each one.

The practice of using the words "support" and "favor" to describe the results of survey questions asking about "acceptability" is clearly inappropriate in principle, given that question wording changes can sometimes produce large marginals changes. The evidence from this small experiment can hardly be considered conclusive, but it does reinforce this argument in the case of the word "support," though it vindicates use of the word "favor." Also clearly inappropriate is the practice of combining response categories such as "very acceptable" and "somewhat acceptable" and simply reporting a single percentage as the proportion of respondents who "favored" a proposed change. Writing a report of survey results or a newspaper summary of those results using the word "acceptable" over and over again would not make for interesting or easy reading, but it would have been highly preferable in order to accurately communicate this survey's results. Because this was not done, the summaries that Aetna and the *New York Times* published most likely overstated public support for the changes in the civil justice system Aetna advocates.

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THE POLLS—A Report

PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT UNITED STATES INTERVENTION IN EL SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA

RICHARD SOBEL

Since the start of the Reagan administration, the national media and polls have devoted substantial attention to United States involvement in Central America. In the early 1980s polling questions focused on opinion about the conflict in El Salvador between opposition forces and the government. In the middle 1980s the focus turned to Nicaragua and questions about support for or opposition to aid for the contras opposing the Sandinista government. A review of the polls indicates that most people in the U.S. are aware but not very knowledgeable or intensely concerned about these situations in Central America. And, though perceiving communism as a threat in Central America, most Americans oppose U.S. intervention there.

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE REGION

About three-quarters of Americans have heard about the situations in El Salvador and Nicaragua, and half know which side the U.S. supports.[1] In March 1982, 79% had "read or heard" about the "war" between the government and the rebels in El Salvador.[2] By March

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[1] Knowledge of details about Central America is limited. For instance, in April 1981 only a quarter (25%) said that Central or Latin America was the "part of the world El Salvador is in," and 28% said South America. Almost half (47%) didn't know (CBS/NYT). In July 1987, 32% said Nicaragua was in Central or Latin America, 21% said South America, and again 47% didn't know.

[2] In July 1983 ABC results, only 63% said they had heard about the war in El Salvador. The 9% drop since May could represent lower awareness of El Salvador as the Nicaragua conflict received more attention. From 1981 to 1983, Gallup found over 80% had heard about the "situation" in El Salvador.

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1986, 78% had "read or heard" about the "fighting" between the Sandinista government and the contra rebels in Nicaragua (ABC/WP). In May 1984, 45% knew that the U.S. supported the government of El Salvador against its opposition. By August 1987, 54% correctly identified the U.S. as backing "the rebels trying to overthrow the government" in Nicaragua.

Although simple awareness of the situation has become relatively widespread, the problems in Central America do not impress Americans as the most important that the United States faces. Even restricting the question to foreign policy concerns among registered voters, the Central America situation has been the most important problem for at most 7% in October 1984 (CBS/NYT).

SECURITY CONCERNS: THREATS TO CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES

Despite limited awareness and knowledge, most Americans consider possible communist advances in Central America as threatening to both El Salvador's and Nicaragua's neighbors.[3] In March 1982, 64% of the public agreed that efforts to set up a "communist government" in El Salvador were a step toward such governments elsewhere in the region (Harris). Similarly, in April 1986, 56% thought "the Government of Nicaragua threatens the security of the other Central American countries" (CBS/NYT).

A large majority of Americans have also viewed the situations in El Salvador and Nicaragua as threats to the security of the U.S. itself. In May 1983, 69% of Americans thought a "pro-communist government" in El Salvador would "be a threat to the security of the United States" (ABC/WP). Between November 1983 and March 1986, half (49% to 56%) saw the "situation in Nicaragua" as "a threat to the security of the United States."

Responding to the perceived threats, about half of all Americans have supported the use of force to stop communism in Central America. In the mid 1980s roughly half agreed that "the United States should take all steps," including force, "to prevent the spread of communism in Central America" (ABC/WP). Approval of force, however, decreased from 55% in May 1984 to 48% in March 1986.

Americans have also been concerned that the United States will, in fact, intervene in Central America. The responses depend on how general the questions are and whether they strike an ideological chord by mentioning communism. The results are also somewhat contradictory because anticommunism and anti-interventionism pull in different directions.

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[3] Most Americans do not identify the Nicaraguan government as communist. In November 1986 only 29% thought Nicaragua had "a communist government," 25% thought "a right-wing dictatorship," 15% some other kind, and 31% didn't know (AP/MG). In June 1985, 67% saw the Sandinistas and 60% saw "anti-government rebels" as enemies or unfriendly (Harris).

From 1983 to 1986, a majority (50% to 55%) found that the "greater danger to the United States" lay in the United States becoming too entangled in internal Central American problems as a result of trying to stop the spread of communism. Only a third (34% to 36%) saw greater peril in "the spread of communism in Central America because the U.S. does not do enough to stop it" (ABC/WP).

In October 1984 and May 1985 the proportion "more worried about the United States getting into a war in Central America" grew from 36% to 45%; the proportion "more worried about a communist takeover in that area" declined slightly from 47% to 43% (CBS/NYT). On the other hand, the proportion which would "rather see" the United States "go to war with Nicaragua to try to prevent it from becoming another Cuba" was about a third (34% to 37%) in 1985 and 1986; the proportion that would rather see Nicaragua "become another Cuba in terms of its relations with the Soviet Union" was slightly less (32% to 28%) (ABC/WP).

THE POST-VIETNAM SYNDROME

Americans have also expressed concerns that the Central America conflicts could become another Vietnam. Gallup polls from 1981 to 1983 showed that roughly two-thirds (62% to 74%) of those aware of the situation in El Salvador thought it was likely that it "could turn into a situation like Vietnam." ABC/WP polls, however, reveal consistent belief since 1983 that the United States will avoid another Vietnam. In March 1988, 57% said that the United States was not headed for a Vietnam-type involvement in Nicaragua.

OPPOSITION TO INTERVENTION

Strong opposition to U.S. involvement in Central America appears in disapproval of both indirect and direct U.S. military aid.[4] Opposition is typically higher when the options are more concrete and when there is no mention of communism. Opposition also grows as questions move from indirect to direct assistance.

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[4] Opposition also derives from the beliefs that the causes of strife in Central America are poverty and lack of human rights, and that other options besides force exist. Between May 1983 and May 1984, 57% to 59% thought poverty and lack of rights rather than communism caused the unrest (ABC/WP). Rather than using force, a majority favored economic sanctions (52%) (Harris, May 1985) or an embargo (46%) (Gallup, January 1985). In May 1984, 66% supported a negotiated settlement in El Salvador and 81% supported the Contadora process for Nicaragua (Harris).

The majority of Americans oppose the United States helping others trying to overthrow the Sandinistas. From June 1983 to June 1985, opposition to helping overthrow the Sandinistas was above majority levels (53% to 60%) (CBS/NYT). Support for assisting an overthrow grew steadily (23% to 32%), however, as No Opinion declined (24% to 15%). From February to June 1985, at least 70% felt the United States should not be "involved in trying to overthrow the government in Nicaragua," while less than 20% said it should (ABC/WP). Opposition dropped to 62%, however, during the administration's campaign for $100 million in contra aid in early to mid 1986. But during the Iran–contra scandal in early 1987 opposition rose again above 70%.

OPPOSITION TO MILITARY AID

Opposition to military aid has been particularly strong, especially when the questions mention dollar amounts (Reiter, 1987). From March 1983 to May 1984, roughly two-thirds (62% to 74%) opposed aid to the government of El Salvador (LAT). About two-thirds opposed specific proposals for military aid to El Salvador; for instance, 68% opposed $60 million in March 1983 (Gallup). Similar opposition appeared regarding aid for the opposition in Nicaragua; for example, 68% opposed $21 million in May 1984 (Harris). In short, from the earliest aid requests in 1983, the majority has opposed such funding.

OPPOSITION TO CONTRA AID

Public opposition was consistently strong during the congressional debates over contra aid. At least 60% opposed the aid in early 1986, and opposition was generally twice the level of support. Even after Reagan's nationally televised speech in March 1986, the majority did not agree that Congress should approve "new military aid" for the contras. Support, however, grew then from 30% to 42%. Opposition increased to 70% when the Iran–contra scandal broke in late 1986. But it declined significantly during the summer 1987 congressional hearings. In fact, following the testimony by Oliver North in July, opposition declined briefly to a mere plurality of 46% (vs. 43% in favor) in ABC findings, and to dead even at 42% in one *Los Angeles Times* poll. This suggests that the hearings educated the public to the administration's position. Support for aid was actually higher in ABC results after the hearings (33% to 40%) than before (22% to 29%).[5]

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[5] On only one of more than 60 questions does the majority clearly support contra aid. In April 1986, 58% agreed that the "U.S. should aid the rebels in Nicaragua to prevent

OPPOSITION TO U.S. TROOPS

In May 1983 fully 80% of Americans disapproved of sending U.S. "troops to fight in El Salvador" (14% approved) (ABC/WP).[6] Gauging opinion about sending troops to Nicaragua is harder because few questions ask about both support and opposition, and there are no trend data. In March 1985, 77% of those most knowledgeable about the situation opposed sending U.S. troops to Nicaragua (Gallup). In April 1986 only 10% supported sending troops to fight in Nicaragua (CBS/NYT). But after North's testimony in July 1987, 54% of likely voters favored "sending U.S. troops to fight in Nicaragua" if that were the "only way to keep Nicaragua from going communist" (42% were opposed) (Harris).

OPPOSITION TO INVASION

The vast majority of Americans oppose what would be the "worst case": a United States invasion of Nicaragua. In November 1984, 74% opposed "an invasion by U.S. Marines to overthrow the Sandinistas" and only 21% supported it (Harris). In 1985, opposition to "invading Nicaragua" was around 75%. After the contra funding campaign in 1986, however, opposition declined to 63% and support grew to 30%. At the start of the Iran–contra hearings in June 1987, opposition rose again to 72% and support declined to 18%. Following North's testimony in July, opposition decreased to 60%, but support only climbed to 24%. Opposition to an invasion is still at least twice the level of support.

REAGAN'S CENTRAL AMERICA RATINGS

The limited support for U.S. intervention also appears in the relatively low approval ratings for Reagan's handling of the situations in Central America. Even in 1986 before the Iran–contra scandal, Reagan's Central America approval (18% to 35%) in Gallup polls was lower than his foreign policy approval (31% to 56%) and much lower than overall

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communist influence from spreading to other countries in Central America" (29% were opposed) (YCS). In mid July 1987, one item each from ABC/WP, LAT, NBC/WSJ (40% vs. 43%), Wirthlin (48% vs. 46%), and a different *Time*/Yankelovich item (38% vs. 46%) showed support and opposition as basically equal.

[6] Questions about sending U.S. advisors to Central America show conflicting results. NBC/AP indicated opposition to sending advisors to El Salvador. A January 1984 CBS/NYT poll showed 50% opposed to sending military advisors there. But Roper indicated support for "keeping" advisors in El Salvador to "help train" government troops. Regarding Nicaragua, there is only an AP/Media General poll in November 1986 which shows 41% opposed to sending advisors to help the contras (39% supported).

approval for handling his job as president (61% to 68%). Approval of Reagan's performance in Central America, El Salvador, and Nicaragua have also been generally lower than disapproval since mid 1981. Approval of Reagan's handling of Nicaragua, however, grew from 26% to 35% between early 1985 and the 1986 contra aid campaign. After the Iran–contra scandal began, Nicaragua approval declined from 34% to 23% (Gallup). The pattern of lower Central America approval than foreign policy approval and overall popularity in both Gallup and ABC polls has continued after the scandal and hearings.

In sum, most Americans are aware of the conflicts in Central America and are concerned with possible communist threats from El Salvador and Nicaragua. But they are not so worried about the situations that they support direct U.S. involvement. While events could change the present balance, even the specter of communism and administration advocacy have not fundamentally altered the disposition of Americans to avoid direct intervention in Central America.[7]

Many of the items from the following sources were found or checked through the Public Opinion Location Library (POLL) of the Roper Center at the University of Connecticut.

ABC/WP—American Broadcasting Company/*Washington Post*
AP/MG—Associated Press/Media General
CBS/NYT—Columbia Broadcasting System/*New York Times*
Gallup—The Gallup Organization
Harris—Louis Harris and Associates
LAT—*Los Angeles Times*
NBC/WSJ—National Broadcasting Company/*Wall Street Journal*
Roper—The Roper Organization
YSW—Yankelovich, Skelley, and White

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[7] The event-driven nature of polling means that data are typically collected during extraordinary times. Base levels may never be identified, and long lags between surveys occur in calm periods. Sometimes questions are not asked during crises; for example, ABC Nicaragua approval questions were not asked from January 1987 until after the Iran–contra hearings. Problems with longer time series, such as knowledge filters on contra aid and Vietnam-syndrome questions (Gallup series, April 1983–September 1987) and different wordings (Harris series, August 1983–July 1987) complicate the tracking of trends. Consistent wordings of regularly repeated items would help clarify opinion on complex situations like Central America involvement.

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THE POLLS—A Review

QUESTION WORDING AND REPORTS OF SURVEY RESULTS: THE CASE OF LOUIS HARRIS AND ASSOCIATES AND AETNA LIFE AND CASUALTY

JON A. KROSNICK

It is now well known that reports of attitudes in surveys are subject to a host of response effects due to question formulation. Even apparently insignificant changes in question wording, form, or context can at times dramatically change the proportions of respondents expressing particular attitudes (see, e.g., Schuman and Presser, 1981). Thus, it seems clear that marginal distributions of responses to attitude measures are not perfect reflections of the distribution of opinion on some issue in a given population. Nonetheless, there are strong demands by policymakers and issue advocates to report marginals as a basis for assessing the public's will on policy matters. Taken together, these realities suggest that, when reporting marginal distributions of responses to attitude questions, survey researchers should report findings using the exact wordings of the questions that were asked (see, e.g., Schuman, 1986). This article describes a recent case in which this was not done.

During September and October of 1986, Louis Harris and Associates conducted a national survey on public attitudes toward the civil justice system and tort law reform (Taylor, Kagay, and Leichenko, 1987). The survey was commissioned by the Aetna Life and Casualty, an insurance company that is often involved in civil litigation and that favors changes in some regulations governing civil lawsuits. The questions asked in the survey addressed topics ranging from citizens' perceptions of current problems with the civil justice system to citizens' attitudes toward proposed changes in the system.

Some results of the survey were reported in an article in the *New York Times* on 7 March 1987 (Newton, 1987). The survey was characterized as indicating that although the public was satisfied with some aspects of the civil justice system, it was dissatisfied with others and favored many reforms. Most importantly, spokesmen from Aetna, the

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Tort Reform Institute, and the Insurance Information Institute were quoted as saying that the poll demonstrates "strong public support" for reforms currently being advocated by these organizations. This claim was presumably based upon the results of nine questions in the survey that measured respondents' attitudes toward a series of proposed changes in the civil justice system.

Four of the six items specifically described in the *New York Times* article were from this set of nine items on proposed changes. These descriptions described levels of public approval for the proposed changes using the words "favor," "support," and "allow" as follows: "Sixty-six percent [of respondents] said they would favor a limit . . ."; "78 percent supported restricting . . ."; "A majority of those polled said they would support limiting . . ."; "Three-quarters of the respondents also said they would allow judges to tell . . ." The summary statements regarding the results said they showed "broad public *support* for changes in the civil justice system" and that the poll's findings "reflected the public's *demand* for reform" (emphasis added).

The findings of the survey were characterized similarly in a press release produced by Aetna and in the Harris report summarizing the survey's findings. For example, the press release began, "An overwhelming majority of Americans support a number of specific reforms to improve the nation's civil justice system." It said as well that "large majorities [of Americans] agree that specific reforms are necessary," that "the public supports many proposed changes in the system," and that "when asked about specific problems in the system, respondents expressed very strong support for changes." Similarly, the Harris report said that "large majorities of Americans support many significant reforms to the civil justice system" (p. 6). In fact, the words "favor" and "support" were used throughout the Harris report to summarize public attitudes toward proposed changes in the civil justice system.

These characterizations of the survey results are questionable for two reasons. First, the questions asked respondents how *acceptable* respondents found each of the proposed changes: respondents indicated whether each proposed change was very acceptable, somewhat acceptable, not too acceptable, or not at all acceptable. But instead of describing the percentages of respondents who found each proposed change acceptable, the *New York Times* and the Aetna press release descriptions claimed to report the proportions of respondents who *favored*, *supported*, *agreed with*, or *would allow* each of them. And the Harris report offered conclusions about the proportions of Americans who supported and favored the changes. Because even apparently slight changes in attitude question wording can sometimes produce large changes in the distributions of responses to them, the proportion of people who reported finding a proposed change acceptable might be different from the proportion who would have said they favored, supported, agreed with, or would allow each proposed change.

Perhaps even more questionable than this word substitution is the way the response marginals were integrated to generate the proportions of respondents who supposedly favored, supported, agreed with, or would allow each change. In all reports and summaries, this was done by combining the proportions of respondents who said they found each proposed change "very acceptable" or "somewhat acceptable." It is remarkable that items where a large proportion of respondents said "somewhat acceptable" were characterized as indicating "very strong support" for the proposed changes.

These procedures probably produced inappropriate summaries of the relevant survey results. The word *acceptable* is a relatively mild word in comparison to *favor* or *support;* many more people may find a given proposed change acceptable than would favor or support it. Therefore, the use of these latter terms may have led to the appearance of inappropriately high levels of public endorsement. However, it is impossible to be certain that any given survey question wording change would have produced different results without conducting an experimental comparison.

In order to explore whether using the words "favor" or "support" might have produced lower levels of apparent public endorsement of the proposed changes in the civil justice system, a small-scale, informal experiment was conducted. Residents of a variety of suburbs of Columbus, Ohio, were contacted by telephone through a random digit dialing procedure during May 1988.[1] The person who answered the phone was asked whether he or she was willing to be interviewed. If not, the phone call was terminated and a new number was dialed. Two interviewers conducted the phone calls; their refusal rate was 55.0%, yielding a total sample of 60 people who completed interviews.

Respondents who agreed to be interviewed were first asked the first six questions of the Harris/Aetna survey, just as they had been asked by Harris in the original survey. Respondents were then asked one of three versions of the nine questions in the Harris survey that measured attitudes toward proposed changes in the civil justice system. One third of respondents were asked the "proposed changes" questions in exactly the same form in which they appeared in the original Harris/Aetna survey. These questions were introduced as follows:

> I will now read some possible changes that might be made to the civil justice system in this country. For each, please tell me how acceptable it

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[1] This was accomplished as follows. A number of three-digit exchanges were selected from the Columbus area telephone directory, and four-digit combinations were generated using a random number table in order to complete the phone numbers to be dialed.

Table 1. Percent of Respondents Choosing One of the Two Most Favorable Response Options

Item	Question Form			Statistical Significance of Difference
	Very or Somewhat Acceptable	Strongly or Somewhat Support	Strongly or Somewhat Favor	
1. Requiring injured persons who bring a lawsuit and then lose to pay the lawyer's fees and expenses of the person sued.	70%	47%	65%	.035
2. Having the judge give the jurors specific guidelines about how much in damages should be awarded in cases of a particular type.	70%	37%	90%	.006
3. Placing a "cap" or upper limit of $250,000 on the amount of money that could be awarded for "pain and suffering" and other noneconomic damages which are sometimes awarded in addition to economic damages.	90%	27%	70%	.001
4. Changing the law so that punitive damages, which are awarded on top of other damages to punish defendants, could only be awarded when the defendant's behavior was flagrantly negligent and malicious.	85%	47%	60%	.262
5. Requiring a "sliding fee" for a plaintiff's lawyer, so that, as the dollar size of a case goes up, the amount of money that the lawyer gets also goes up, but not as fast as when the lawyer gets a fixed percentage of the damages.	70%	40%	70%	.038

6. After the jury has decided a lawsuit, having the judge—instead of the jury—set the amount of damages awarded.	60%	17%	68%	.036
7. Requiring a judge to reduce the amount of damages that a jury awards by subtracting the amount of compensation that the victim already has received from health insurance, Workers' Compensation, or other sources, so that the plaintiff does not get compensation twice over.	80%	69%	85%	.819
8. Sometimes two defendants are sued together and lose, and one of them can't pay the damages. In many states, the defendant who can pay is then required to pay all the damages, even if his responsibility for the accident was minor. Some people want to change this, so that defendants would pay only their own share, even if this means that the injured party would receive less in damages than the court awarded.	79%	50%	90%	.022
9. Under the law in most states now, manufacturers are responsible for the products they make. So, if a customer is injured by using a defective product, then the customer can sue the manufacturer for damages—even if the manufacturer was not careless or negligent. Some people want to change this, so that a manufacturer would have to be careless or negligent before they could be held responsible for an injury resulting from their product.	75%	73%	60%	.487
Average	75%	45%	73%	

> would be to you personally—very acceptable, somewhat acceptable, not too acceptable, or not acceptable at all. You might think of these as changes that could affect you directly if you are involved in a civil lawsuit.

Another third of respondents were asked instead whether they would "strongly favor," "somewhat favor," "favor a little," or "not favor at all" each proposed change. And the final third of respondents were asked whether they would "strongly support," "somewhat support," "support a little," or "not support at all" each proposed change. Which form of these questions each respondent received was determined randomly.

The results of this informal experiment were in part consistent with intuition and in part surprising (see Table 1). As expected, the response alternative wording variations had statistically significant effects ($p < .04$) on marginal distributions for six of the nine items, and the other three items showed similar trends. Also as expected, more respondents said they found the proposed changes acceptable than said they supported them. For example, 60% of the respondents who were asked the "acceptability" questions said "very acceptable" or "somewhat acceptable" in response to "After a jury has decided a lawsuit, having the judge—instead of the jury—set the amount of the damages." In contrast, only 17% of the respondents who were asked the "support" questions said "strongly support" or "somewhat support" in response to this item, a difference of 43%. An average (mean computed across the nine items) of 75% of respondents chose one of the two most positive response alternatives when the "acceptability" questions were asked, in comparison to only 45% when the "support" questions were asked, a difference of 30%. Thus, many fewer respondents expressed support for the proposed changes than said they would find them acceptable.

However, contrary to expectations, the proportion of respondents who said they strongly or somewhat favored each proposed change was generally quite comparable to the proportion saying they found it very or somewhat acceptable. Averaged across the nine items, 73% of respondents chose the two most positive response options when asked the "favor" questions, in comparison to 75% doing so when asked the "acceptability" questions. A similar result is obtained when only the single most positive response option is considered: 35% versus 31%, respectively. Thus, it seems that comparable results may have been obtained in the Harris survey had respondents been asked about the degree to which they favored each proposed change instead of being asked how acceptable they found each one.

The practice of using the words "support" and "favor" to describe the results of survey questions asking about "acceptability" is clearly inappropriate in principle, given that question wording changes can sometimes produce large marginals changes. The evidence from this small experiment can hardly be considered conclusive, but it does reinforce this argument in the case of the word "support," though it vindicates use of the word "favor." Also clearly inappropriate is the practice of combining response categories such as "very acceptable" and "somewhat acceptable" and simply reporting a single percentage as the proportion of respondents who "favored" a proposed change. Writing a report of survey results or a newspaper summary of those results using the word "acceptable" over and over again would not make for interesting or easy reading, but it would have been highly preferable in order to accurately communicate this survey's results. Because this was not done, the summaries that Aetna and the *New York Times* published most likely overstated public support for the changes in the civil justice system Aetna advocates.

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THE POLLS—A Report

PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT UNITED STATES INTERVENTION IN EL SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA

RICHARD SOBEL

Since the start of the Reagan administration, the national media and polls have devoted substantial attention to United States involvement in Central America. In the early 1980s polling questions focused on opinion about the conflict in El Salvador between opposition forces and the government. In the middle 1980s the focus turned to Nicaragua and questions about support for or opposition to aid for the contras opposing the Sandinista government. A review of the polls indicates that most people in the U.S. are aware but not very knowledgeable or intensely concerned about these situations in Central America. And, though perceiving communism as a threat in Central America, most Americans oppose U.S. intervention there.

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE REGION

About three-quarters of Americans have heard about the situations in El Salvador and Nicaragua, and half know which side the U.S. supports.[1] In March 1982, 79% had "read or heard" about the "war" between the government and the rebels in El Salvador.[2] By March

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[1] Knowledge of details about Central America is limited. For instance, in April 1981 only a quarter (25%) said that Central or Latin America was the "part of the world El Salvador is in," and 28% said South America. Almost half (47%) didn't know (CBS/NYT). In July 1987, 32% said Nicaragua was in Central or Latin America, 21% said South America, and again 47% didn't know.

[2] In July 1983 ABC results, only 63% said they had heard about the war in El Salvador. The 9% drop since May could represent lower awareness of El Salvador as the Nicaragua conflict received more attention. From 1981 to 1983, Gallup found over 80% had heard about the "situation" in El Salvador.

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Although simple awareness of the situation has become relatively widespread, the problems in Central America do not impress Americans as the most important that the United States faces. Even restricting the question to foreign policy concerns among registered voters, the Central America situation has been the most important problem for at most 7% in October 1984 (CBS/NYT).

SECURITY CONCERNS: THREATS TO CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES

Despite limited awareness and knowledge, most Americans consider possible communist advances in Central America as threatening to both El Salvador's and Nicaragua's neighbors.[3] In March 1982, 64% of the public agreed that efforts to set up a "communist government" in El Salvador were a step toward such governments elsewhere in the region (Harris). Similarly, in April 1986, 56% thought "the Government of Nicaragua threatens the security of the other Central American countries" (CBS/NYT).

A large majority of Americans have also viewed the situations in El Salvador and Nicaragua as threats to the security of the U.S. itself. In May 1983, 69% of Americans thought a "pro-communist government" in El Salvador would "be a threat to the security of the United States" (ABC/WP). Between November 1983 and March 1986, half (49% to 56%) saw the "situation in Nicaragua" as "a threat to the security of the United States."

Responding to the perceived threats, about half of all Americans have supported the use of force to stop communism in Central America. In the mid 1980s roughly half agreed that "the United States should take all steps," including force, "to prevent the spread of communism in Central America" (ABC/WP). Approval of force, however, decreased from 55% in May 1984 to 48% in March 1986.

Americans have also been concerned that the United States will, in fact, intervene in Central America. The responses depend on how general the questions are and whether they strike an ideological chord by mentioning communism. The results are also somewhat contradictory because anticommunism and anti-interventionism pull in different directions.

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Americans have also expressed concerns that the Central America conflicts could become another Vietnam. Gallup polls from 1981 to 1983 showed that roughly two-thirds (62% to 74%) of those aware of the situation in El Salvador thought it was likely that it "could turn into a situation like Vietnam." ABC/WP polls, however, reveal consistent belief since 1983 that the United States will avoid another Vietnam. In March 1988, 57% said that the United States was not headed for a Vietnam-type involvement in Nicaragua.

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[4] Opposition also derives from the beliefs that the causes of strife in Central America are poverty and lack of human rights, and that other options besides force exist. Between May 1983 and May 1984, 57% to 59% thought poverty and lack of rights rather than communism caused the unrest (ABC/WP). Rather than using force, a majority favored economic sanctions (52%) (Harris, May 1985) or an embargo (46%) (Gallup, January 1985). In May 1984, 66% supported a negotiated settlement in El Salvador and 81% supported the Contadora process for Nicaragua (Harris).

The majority of Americans oppose the United States helping others trying to overthrow the Sandinistas. From June 1983 to June 1985, opposition to helping overthrow the Sandinistas was above majority levels (53% to 60%) (CBS/NYT). Support for assisting an overthrow grew steadily (23% to 32%), however, as No Opinion declined (24% to 15%). From February to June 1985, at least 70% felt the United States should not be "involved in trying to overthrow the government in Nicaragua," while less than 20% said it should (ABC/WP). Opposition dropped to 62%, however, during the administration's campaign for $100 million in contra aid in early to mid 1986. But during the Iran–contra scandal in early 1987 opposition rose again above 70%.

OPPOSITION TO MILITARY AID

Opposition to military aid has been particularly strong, especially when the questions mention dollar amounts (Reiter, 1987). From March 1983 to May 1984, roughly two-thirds (62% to 74%) opposed aid to the government of El Salvador (LAT). About two-thirds opposed specific proposals for military aid to El Salvador; for instance, 68% opposed $60 million in March 1983 (Gallup). Similar opposition appeared regarding aid for the opposition in Nicaragua; for example, 68% opposed $21 million in May 1984 (Harris). In short, from the earliest aid requests in 1983, the majority has opposed such funding.

OPPOSITION TO CONTRA AID

Public opposition was consistently strong during the congressional debates over contra aid. At least 60% opposed the aid in early 1986, and opposition was generally twice the level of support. Even after Reagan's nationally televised speech in March 1986, the majority did not agree that Congress should approve "new military aid" for the contras. Support, however, grew then from 30% to 42%. Opposition increased to 70% when the Iran–contra scandal broke in late 1986. But it declined significantly during the summer 1987 congressional hearings. In fact, following the testimony by Oliver North in July, opposition declined briefly to a mere plurality of 46% (vs. 43% in favor) in ABC findings, and to dead even at 42% in one *Los Angeles Times* poll. This suggests that the hearings educated the public to the administration's position. Support for aid was actually higher in ABC results after the hearings (33% to 40%) than before (22% to 29%).[5]

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[5] On only one of more than 60 questions does the majority clearly support contra aid. In April 1986, 58% agreed that the "U.S. should aid the rebels in Nicaragua to prevent

OPPOSITION TO U.S. TROOPS

In May 1983 fully 80% of Americans disapproved of sending U.S. "troops to fight in El Salvador" (14% approved) (ABC/WP).[6] Gauging opinion about sending troops to Nicaragua is harder because few questions ask about both support and opposition, and there are no trend data. In March 1985, 77% of those most knowledgeable about the situation opposed sending U.S. troops to Nicaragua (Gallup). In April 1986 only 10% supported sending troops to fight in Nicaragua (CBS/NYT). But after North's testimony in July 1987, 54% of likely voters favored "sending U.S. troops to fight in Nicaragua" if that were the "only way to keep Nicaragua from going communist" (42% were opposed) (Harris).

OPPOSITION TO INVASION

The vast majority of Americans oppose what would be the "worst case": a United States invasion of Nicaragua. In November 1984, 74% opposed "an invasion by U.S. Marines to overthrow the Sandinistas" and only 21% supported it (Harris). In 1985, opposition to "invading Nicaragua" was around 75%. After the contra funding campaign in 1986, however, opposition declined to 63% and support grew to 30%. At the start of the Iran–contra hearings in June 1987, opposition rose again to 72% and support declined to 18%. Following North's testimony in July, opposition decreased to 60%, but support only climbed to 24%. Opposition to an invasion is still at least twice the level of support.

REAGAN'S CENTRAL AMERICA RATINGS

The limited support for U.S. intervention also appears in the relatively low approval ratings for Reagan's handling of the situations in Central America. Even in 1986 before the Iran–contra scandal, Reagan's Central America approval (18% to 35%) in Gallup polls was lower than his foreign policy approval (31% to 56%) and much lower than overall

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communist influence from spreading to other countries in Central America" (29% were opposed) (YCS). In mid July 1987, one item each from ABC/WP, LAT, NBC/WSJ (40% vs. 43%), Wirthlin (48% vs. 46%), and a different *Time*/Yankelovich item (38% vs. 46%) showed support and opposition as basically equal.

[6] Questions about sending U.S. advisors to Central America show conflicting results. NBC/AP indicated opposition to sending advisors to El Salvador. A January 1984 CBS/NYT poll showed 50% opposed to sending military advisors there. But Roper indicated support for "keeping" advisors in El Salvador to "help train" government troops. Regarding Nicaragua, there is only an AP/Media General poll in November 1986 which shows 41% opposed to sending advisors to help the contras (39% supported).

approval for handling his job as president (61% to 68%). Approval of Reagan's performance in Central America, El Salvador, and Nicaragua have also been generally lower than disapproval since mid 1981. Approval of Reagan's handling of Nicaragua, however, grew from 26% to 35% between early 1985 and the 1986 contra aid campaign. After the Iran–contra scandal began, Nicaragua approval declined from 34% to 23% (Gallup). The pattern of lower Central America approval than foreign policy approval and overall popularity in both Gallup and ABC polls has continued after the scandal and hearings.

In sum, most Americans are aware of the conflicts in Central America and are concerned with possible communist threats from El Salvador and Nicaragua. But they are not so worried about the situations that they support direct U.S. involvement. While events could change the present balance, even the specter of communism and administration advocacy have not fundamentally altered the disposition of Americans to avoid direct intervention in Central America.[7]

Many of the items from the following sources were found or checked through the Public Opinion Location Library (POLL) of the Roper Center at the University of Connecticut.

ABC/WP—American Broadcasting Company/*Washington Post*
AP/MG—Associated Press/Media General
CBS/NYT—Columbia Broadcasting System/*New York Times*
Gallup—The Gallup Organization
Harris—Louis Harris and Associates
LAT—*Los Angeles Times*
NBC/WSJ—National Broadcasting Company/*Wall Street Journal*
Roper—The Roper Organization
YSW—Yankelovich, Skelley, and White

References

Ladd, Everrett C. (1983)
"Public opinion on Central America." Public Opinion, August/September, 20, 41.
——— (1987)
"Where the public stands on Nicaragua." Public Opinion, September/October, 2–4, 59, 60.

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[7] The event-driven nature of polling means that data are typically collected during extraordinary times. Base levels may never be identified, and long lags between surveys occur in calm periods. Sometimes questions are not asked during crises; for example, ABC Nicaragua approval questions were not asked from January 1987 until after the Iran–contra hearings. Problems with longer time series, such as knowledge filters on contra aid and Vietnam-syndrome questions (Gallup series, April 1983–September 1987) and different wordings (Harris series, August 1983–July 1987) complicate the tracking of trends. Consistent wordings of regularly repeated items would help clarify opinion on complex situations like Central America involvement.

LeoGrande, William (1985)
"Central America and the polls." In Central America, 1985. Washington: Coalition for New Foreign and Military Policy.
Reiter, Howard L. (1987)
"U.S. public opinion of the Nicaraguan war and implications for political strategy." Paper presented at the American Political Science Association, Chicago, 5 September.
Sobel, Richard (1987)
"Public opinion toward U.S. involvement in Central America." Paper presented at the American Political Science Association, Chicago, 4 September.

KNOWLEDGE, AWARENESS, RECOGNITION

ABC/WP: Have you read or heard anything about the fighting between the Sandinista government in Nicaragua and the rebels seeking to overthrow that government?

	7/83	*11/83*	*1/84*	*3/85*	*6/85*	*3/6/86*	*3/20/86*
Yes, have read or heard	59	51	58	81	74	72	78
No, have not read or heard	39	46	39	18	25	26	21
No opinion	2	3	2	1	2	1	1
N	1,505	1,505	1,524	1,506	1,506	543	1,148

ABC/WP: Do you happen to know which side the U.S. is backing in Nicaragua, the rebels or the government?

	7/83	*8/83*[a]	*11/83*	*1/84*[b]	*5/84*[c]	*3/85*	*6/85*	*3/6/86*[d]	*3/20/86*	*5/87*	*8/87*
Rebels	29	22	26	25	26	37	46	50	59	52	54
Government	24	45	24	27	33	23	20	14	13	21	20
Neither	1	*	*	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
No opinion	47	32	50	47	40	39	34	33	27	26	24
N	1,505	1,505	1,505	1,524	1,511	1,506	1,506	543	1,148	1,509	1,205

[a] Which side do you think the United States government is backing . . . ?

[b] . . . the U.S. is backing (in the fighting between the Sandinista government in Nicaragua and the rebels seeking to overthrow the government), the rebels or the government?

[c] How about in Nicaragua: is the United States government backing the government there, or the rebels trying to overthrow the government?

[d] Is the United States backing the government there (in Nicaragua), or the rebels trying to overthrow the government?

* Less than .5 percent.

CBS/NYT: Which side does the U.S. government support in Nicaragua—the current government, the people fighting against the government, or haven't you been following this closely enough to say?

	6/83		*4/84*	*5/85*	*4/86*
Government	7	Government	8	6	4
Opponents of government	13	People fighting	19	26	38
Neither (vol.)	9	Not following	62	59	47
No opinion	71	No opinion	11	10	11
N	1,365		1,367	1,509	1,601

IDENTIFICATION AS AN IMPORTANT PROBLEM

YSW: What are the main issues or problems facing the country that particularly worry or concern you? (Registered voters)

Central America/Situation in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Grenada, etc.

	5/81	*12/83*	*2/84*	*8/84*	*9/84*	*10/84*	*12/84*	*5/85*	*7/85*	*9/85*	*11/85*	*2/87*
	2	9	6	3	3	4	4	7	4	2	2	6
N	1,221	1,000	1,021	1,018	1,023	1,014	1,024	1,014	1,013	1,014	1,020	1,014

Gallup: What do you think is the most important foreign policy problem facing the country today?

	Gallup *10/83*[a]	*Gallup* *11/83*[a]	*Gallup* *11/83*[b]	*CBS* *1/84*[c]	*CBS* *2/84*[c]	*CBS* *10/84*[c]
Central America	5	3	4	2	4	7
N	1,503	1,504	1,504	1,443	1,410	1,809

[a] Central America/El Salvador. [b] Grenada. [c] Registered voters.

THREATS TO CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES

ABC/WP: Would you say that the situation in Nicaragua is a threat to the security of the United States or not? (Is that a major threat or a minor threat?)

	11/83	*1/84*	*3/6/86*	*3/16/86*	*3/20/86*
Nicaragua a security threat	51	53	49	56	56
Major	29	28	27	29	32
Minor	22	25	22	27	24
Not a threat	29	32	43	31	37
No opinion	20	6	8	13	8
N	1,505	1,524	543	511	1,148

ABC/WP: Which would you say is the greater danger to the United States:
a. The spread of communism in Central America because the U.S. doesn't do enough to stop it, or
b. The U.S. becoming too entangled in the internal Central American problem as a result of trying to stop the spread of communism.

	5/83	*3/86*
a. Communism spread	34	36
b. U.S. entangled	55	50
Don't know	11	13
N	1,501	543

CBS/NYT: When it comes to the situation in Central America, are you more worried about the United States getting involved in a war there, or more worried about a communist takeover in that area?

	9/84	*10/14/84*	*10/23/84*	*5/85*	*2/88*[a]	*3/88*
War	40	38	36	45	41	53
Communists	48	43	46	43	43	37
Both (vol.)	5	4	5	6	3	4
Neither (vol.)	1	4	3	2	4	2
Don't know/no answer	6	11	10	4	9	4
N	1,564	1,809	1,463	1,509	1,922	1,654

[a] Registered voters in 12 Southern and border states.

POST-VIETNAM SYNDROME

Gallup: How likely do you think it is the U.S. involvement in El Salvador could turn into a situation like Vietnam—that is, the U.S. would become more and more deeply involved as time goes on?

	3/81[a]	*2/82*[b]	*3/83*[c]	*6/83*[d]	*7/83*[e]	*9/83*[f]
Very likely	33	44	37	37	41	33
Fairly likely	29	30	31	34	31	34
Not very likely	23	18	20	19	16	19
Not likely at all	11	7	6	5	5	7
Don't know	5	1	6	5	7	7
N	1,601	755	1,558	1,558	1,565	1,574

[a] Heard or read of El Salvador situation (84%).
[b] Knew which side U.S. backing in El Salvador.
[c] Those aware of situation in El Salvador.
[d] Based on aware group.
[e] Those who heard/read of El Salvador situation.
[f] Heard/read about El Salvador situation (84%).

ABC/WP: Do you think the United States is heading for the same kind of involvement (in El Salvador/Central America/Nicaragua) as it had in the Vietnam war, or do you think the United States will avoid that kind of involvement this time?

	3/82[a]	*5/83*[b]	*7/83*[b]	*5/84*[b]	*3/85*[b]	*3/86*[c]	*3/88*[c]
Headed for same	46	37	40	33	29	30	38
Not headed	49	55	55	62	66	61	57
Don't know/no answer	5	8	5	5	5	9	5
N	1,506	1,501	1,505	1,511	1,506	543	1,007

[a] In El Salvador. [b] In Central America. [c] In Nicaragua.

POLICY PREFERENCES

ABC/WP: Do you agree or disagree that the United States should take all steps including the use of force to prevent the spread of communism in Central America?

	5/84	*3/86*
Agree	55	48
Disagree	34	42
Don't know	11	10
N	1,511	543

ABC/WP: Which would you rather see happen: for Nicaragua to become another Cuba in terms of its relations with the Soviet Union, or for the U.S. to go to war with Nicaragua to try to prevent it from becoming another Cuba?

	6/85	*3/86*
Nicaragua another Cuba	32	28
U.S. go to war	34	37
Neither/other options	19	22
Don't know/no opinion	14	13
N	1,506	543

ABC/WP: As you may know the United States through the CIA is supporting the rebels. Would you say you approve or disapprove of the United States being involved in trying to overthrow the government in Nicaragua?

	7/83	*11/83*	*1/84*	*3/86*[a]
Approve	20	30	23	32
Disapprove	62	48	55	52
No opinion	17	22	22	15
N	1,505	1,505	1,524	543

[a] As you may know the United States is supporting the rebels. . . .

ABC/WP: Should the U.S. be involved in trying to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, or not?

	5/83[a]	*2/85*	*3/85*	*6/85*	*3/86*	*1/87*	*5/87*	*8/87*
Yes, should	13	18	16	18	28	16	24	29
No, should not	78	70	72	71	62	77	71	64
DK, no opinion	10	12	13	11	10	7	5	7
N	1,501	1,506	1,506	1,506	1,148	1,505	1,509	1,205

[a] Do you think the United States should secretly try . . .

CBS/NYT: The Reagan administration says the U.S. should help people in Nicaragua who are trying to overthrow the pro-Soviet government there. Other people say that even if our country doesn't like the government in Nicaragua, we should not help overthrow it. Do you think we should help the people trying to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, or not?

	6/83	*10/26/83*[a]	*10/27/83*[b]	*4/84*	*10/84*[c]	*5/85*[d]
Help overthrow	23	23	21	27	29	32
Not help	53	58	60	55	50	53
No opinion	24	19	19	18	21	15
N	1,365	548	545	1,367	1,809	1,509

[a] Before Reagan speech. [b] After Reagan speech. [c] Registered voters (73%).

[d] Ronald Reagan says the U.S. should help the people in Nicaragua who are trying to overthrow the pro-Soviet government there. Other . . .

OPPOSITION TO CONTRA AID

ABC/WP: President Reagan is asking Congress for new military aid for the Nicaraguan rebels known as the "Contras." Do you agree or disagree with Reagan that Congress should approve the money?

	3/6/86	*3/16/86*	*3/25/86*[a]
Agree	34	30	42
Disagree	59	54	53
No opinion	8	16	5
N	543	511	530

[a] President Reagan has asked Congress . . .

ABC/WP: Do you generally favor or oppose the U.S. Congress granting military aid to the Nicaraguan rebels known as the "Contras"?

	4/86[a]	*6/86*[b]	*1/87*[b]	*3/87*	*5/87*	*7/15/87*	*7/21/87*
Favor	28	29	22	29	29	43	41
Oppose	65	62	70	62	67	46	49
DK/no opinion	7	9	7	9	4	12	10
N	1,505	1,505	1,505	505	1,509	767	756

	8/3/87	*8/12/87*	*9/87*	*10/87*
Favor	36	40	33	33
Oppose	59	56	61	63
No opinion	5	7	5	4
N	1,205	512	2,116	1,505

[a] . . . the U.S. granting $100 million dollars in military and other aid . . .

[b] . . . military and other aid . . .

Gallup: In your opinion, should the U.S. government be giving assistance to the guerrilla forces now opposing the Marxist government in Nicaragua?

	4/83[a]	*8/85*	*12/86*	*4/87*[b]	*9/87*[b]
Yes, should	25	29	29	26	40
No, shouldn't	56	58	58	56	46
No opinion	19	13	13	18	14
N	859	862	865	4,244	1,903

[a] Knew who U.S. backing in El Salvador (47%).

[b] . . . should the U.S. be giving assistance to the Contras, that is, the guerrilla forces now opposing the Marxist government in Nicaragua?

Harris: Do you favor or oppose the U.S. sending . . . aid to the rebels in Nicaragua? (*N* = 1200+)

	10/84[a]	*2/85*[b]	*5/85*[c]	*5/85*[b]	*4/86*[d]	*4/86*[e]	*10/86*[f]	*6/87*[g]	*7/87*[h]	*7/87*[i]
Favor	25	28	37	23	33	39	30	22	32	44
Oppose	68	66	58	73	62	54	60	74	61	51
Not sure	7	6	5	4	5	7	10	4	7	5

[a] . . . $21 million in military . . . (likely voters).

[b] . . . $14 million in military . . .

[c] . . . $14 million in nonmilitary aid to the rebels and other groups who are opposed to the Sandinista government.

[d] $100 million in military and non-military aid to the Contra rebels.

[e] just $30 million in non-military aid to the Contra rebels . . .

[f] $100 million in military and non-military aid . . . (likely voters).

[g] once again sending $100 million in military and other aid . . .

[h] once again sending $100 million in military aid . . .

[i] $100 million in military and other aid . . . (likely voters).

NBC/WSJ: Do you approve or disapprove of the Reagan administration's support of the rebels in Nicaragua?

	11/86	*12/86*	*1/87*	*3/87*	*5/87*	*7/87*	*9/87*
Approve	26	28	32	29	32	40	37
Disapprove	54	55	53	58	54	43	48
Not sure	20	17	15	13	14	17	15
N	1,596	1,596	1,576	2,153	1,568	1,200	1,544

NBC/WSJ: Do you favor or oppose the U.S. government giving money for military aid to the rebels fighting the government of Nicaragua?

	12/86	*1/87*	*7/87*[a]	*1/88*
Favor	25	28	38	30
Oppose	65	62	48	57
Not sure	10	10	14	13
N	1,596	1,576	1,200	2,392

[a] Do you think Congress should now vote for military aid to the rebels fighting the government of Nicaragua, or don't you think so?

CBS/NYT: Do you approve or disapprove of the United States government giving military and other aid to the Contras who are fighting against the government of Nicaragua?

	10/84[a]	*5/85*[b]	*4/86*[c]	*1/87*	*7/9/87*	*7/21/87*	*8/87*	*10/87*	*1/88*	*3/88*[d]
Approve	30	24	25	28	33	40	33	35	30	39
Disapprove	44	66	62	60	51	49	49	53	58	48
No opinion	26	11	13	12	16	12	18	12	12	14
N	1,463	1,509	1,601	1,590	658	745	1,480	1,326	1,663	1,654

[a] Do you think the United States government should provide military assistance to the people trying to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, or not? (Registered voters [63%]).

[b] Should we send military supplies and weapons to the people trying to overthrow the government in Nicaragua?

[c] Do you think the U.S. government should give $100 million in military and other aid to the Contras trying to overthrow . . .

[d] Should the United States government give military aid to the Contras who are fighting against the government in Nicaragua, or shouldn't they?

LAT: Do you approve or disapprove of U.S. aid to the Contras in Nicaragua?

	2/87	*7/87*	*8/87*
Approve	31	42	34
Strongly	12	20	17
Somewhat	19	22	17
Disapprove	54	42	58
Somewhat	24	19	18
Strongly	30	23	30
Not sure	14	15	16
Refused	1	1	2
N	2,346	2,311	2,040

OPPOSITION TO U.S. TROOPS

NBC/AP: Do you favor or oppose the sending of U.S. military advisors to El Salvador?

	4/81[a]	*3/82*[b]	*3/82*[c]
Favor	42	34	38
Oppose	52	62	58
Not sure	6	4	4
N	1,604	1,603	1,603

[a] Heard/read about El Salvador (68%).

[b] Know of U.S. policy in El Salvador (57%).

[c] Know of U.S. policy in Central America (14%).

Roper: The United States should . . . keep U.S. military advisors in El Salvador to help train the El Salvador government troops in their fight against leftist guerrillas there.

	2/12/82	*2/12/83*	*9/24/83*	*2/11/84*	*1/5/85*
Strongly favor	16	13	15	15	16
Generally favor	34	32	35	39	34
Generally oppose	22	24	20	23	24
Strongly oppose	19	21	18	14	15
Don't know	9	10	12	9	12
N	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	1,989

ABC/WP: Would you approve or disapprove of the United States sending troops to fight in El Salvador?

	3/82	*5/83*
Approve	18	14
Disapprove	79	80
DK/no answer	4	6
N	1,218	1,501

Harris: Would you favor or oppose the U.S. invading Nicaragua to overthrow the Sandinista government?

	3/85[a]	*5/85*[b]	*4/86*[b]	*6/87*	*7/87*
Favor	17	20	30	18	24
Oppose	76	75	63	72	60
Not sure	7	5	7	10	16
N	1,256	1,256	1,254	1,247	1,246

[a] Do you favor or oppose . . . ?
[b] If it came to it, would you favor or oppose . . . ?

REAGAN'S CENTRAL AMERICA RATINGS

Gallup: Would you tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way President Reagan is handling that problem? The situation in El Salvador/Central America/Nicaragua. (N = 1,500+ unless noted)

El Salvador

	10/81	*2/82*[a]	*3/82*	*4/21/82*	*4/30/82*	*4/83*[b]
Approve	22	33	22	27	29	44
Disapprove	32	49	50	48	43	42
No opinion	46	18	28	25	28	14

Central America

	4/83	*6/83*	*8/83*	*10/83*	*11/83*	*1/84*	*2/84*
Approve	21	25	24	26	36	28	29
Disapprove	50	46	51	50	44	49	48
No opinion	30	29	25	24	20	23	23

	4/84	*5/84*	*7/84*	*11/84*	*5/85*
Approve	29	28	27	34	29
Disapprove	48	49	45	43	50
No opinion	24	23	28	23	21

Nicaragua

	11/83[c]	*3/85*	*7/85*	*4/86*	*7/86*	*12/86*[d]	*4/87*	*8/87*	*7/88*[e]
Approve	33	26	29	35	34	23	20	27	26
Disapprove	43	44	45	42	46	64	62	58	55
No opinion	24	31	26	23	20	13	18	15	19

[a] *N* = 755; knew which side U.S. backing in El Salvador (54%).

[b] *N* = 859; knew which side U.S. backing in El Salvador (47%).

[c] The U.S. is providing military assistance to the forces trying to overthrow the leftist Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Do you approve or disapprove of this U.S. policy?

[d] *N* = 865. [e] *N* = 1,000.

ABC/WP: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Reagan is handling the situation in Central America?

	7/83[a]	*2/84*[b]	*5/84*[b]	*5/85*[b]	*6/85*	*7/85*	*3/86*
Approve	33	42	37	40	43	44	47
Disapprove	48	46	51	47	45	45	34
No opinion	19	12	12	14	12	11	19
N	1,505	1,206	1,511	1,503	1,506	1,506	543

[a] . . . in the Central American countries of El Salvador and Nicaragua?

[b] . . . dealing with problems in Central America?

ABC/WP: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Ronald Reagan is handling the situation in Nicaragua?

	7/83[a]	*3/6/86*	*3/16/86*	*3/20/86*	*4/86*	*5/86*	*6/86*	*1/87*	*3/88*
Approve	33	37	36	37	47	44	45	29	40
Disapprove	48	47	48	52	40	40	44	61	51
No opinion	19	16	16	11	13	16	11	10	9
N	1,505	543	511	1,148	1,505	1,506	1,505	1,505	1,007

[a] . . . in the Central American countries of El Salvador and Nicaragua?

Harris: How would you rate President Reagan on handling the situation in Central America? (Positive = excellent + good; Negative = only fair + poor) (*N* = 1,200+)

El Salvador

	3/82	*4/82*	*8/82*	*3/83*	*4/7/83*	*4/29/83*	*6/83*	*7/83*	*8/83*	*9/83*
Positive	23	27	23	21	20	31	24	25	24	29
Negative	64	60	66	66	64	64	67	62	66	62
Not sure	13	13	11	13	16	5	9	13	10	9

Central America

	10/83	*11/83*	*12/83*	*1/84*	*2/84*[a]	*3/1/84*[a]	*3/8/84*	*5/84*[a]	*9/84*[a]	*12/84*
Positive	33	40	34	30	30	29	30	31	41	37
Negative	58	52	59	64	62	61	65	62	57	59
Not sure	9	8	7	6	8	10	5	7	2	4

	3/85	*5/85*	*7/85*	*9/85*	*11/85*	*1/86*	*4/86*	*8/86*
Positive	34	32	36	32	38	39	40	33
Negative	59	63	59	64	57	58	54	59
Not sure	7	5	5	4	5	3	6	8

[a] Likely voters.

Central America (*continued*)

	1/87	*8/87*	*10/87*	*12/87*	*6/88*	*1/89*
Positive	27	31	33	26	33	37
Negative	66	67	63	68	63	59
Not sure	7	2	4	6	4	4

Gallup: Do you approve of Reagan's handling of . . .

	Job as President *11/18/83*	Foreign Policy *11/18/83*	Central America *11/18/83*	Grenada *11/18/83*
Approve	53	46	36	59
Disapprove	37	41	44	32
No opinion	10	13	20	9
N	1,504	1,504	1,504	1,504

Gallup/ABC: Comparison of Reagan's ratings: job as president, foreign policy, Central America, Nicaragua.

	Job *Gallup* *7/86*	FP *Gallup* *7/86*	Nic *Gallup* *4/86*	Job *ABC* *3/86*	FP *ABC* *2/86*	CA *ABC* *3/86*	Nic *ABC* *3/86*	Job *ABC* *1/87*	FP *ABC* *1/87*	Nic *ABC* *1/87*
Approve	63	51	35	65	61	47	37	50	36	29
Disapprove	28	35	42	32	35	34	47	48	60	61
No opinion	9	14	23	3	4	19	16	3	4	10
N	1,539	1,539	1,552	1,148	1,504	543	543	1,505	1,505	1,505

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THE POLLS	Review: Lifetime Likelihood of Victimization *by James P. Lynch*
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PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY

VOLUME 53 / SUMMER 1989 / NUMBER 2

Articles

The American Soldier: An Assessment, Several Wars Later 155
ROBIN M. WILLIAMS, JR.

The Role of Constituent Trust in Congressional Elections 175
GLENN R. PARKER

Social Identification and Public Opinion: Effects of Communicating Group Conflict 197
VINCENT PRICE

Mass and Elite Attitudes About Wiretapping in Canada: Implications for Democratic Theory and Politics 225
JOSEPH F. FLETCHER

Some Like It Hot: Individual Differences in Responses to Group Feeling Thermometers 246
CLYDE WILCOX, LEE SIGELMAN, and ELIZABETH COOK

In Memoriam

Milton Rokeach, 1918–1988 258
DONALD T. CAMPBELL

The Polls

Review: An Evaluation of *Lifetime Likelihood of Victimization* 262
JAMES P. LYNCH

Report: Women's and Men's Attitudes About a Woman's Place and Role 265
RITA J. SIMON and JEAN M. LANDIS

Books

Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion* 277
STEVEN H. CHAFFEE

Philip Meyer, *Ethical Journalism: A Guide for Students, Practitioners, and Consumers* 279
ALBERT E. GOLLIN

Barry Sussman, *What Americans Really Think and Why Our Politicians Pay No Attention* 281
JAMES D. WRIGHT

Book Note 283

THE ROLE OF CONSTITUENT TRUST IN CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

GLENN R. PARKER

Abstract The purpose of this inquiry is to introduce a new variable into the study of congressional elections—constituent trust. Constituent trust is defined as the level of confidence that constituents have in their elected representative. This analysis suggests a strategy for measuring constituent trust and develops a model that relates constituent trust directly and indirectly to electoral support. By pooling cross-sectional data drawn from the University of Michigan's American National Election Studies (1978–84), I demonstrate that when constituent trust is salient in voter cognitions, it has a significant direct influence on electoral support and is a better predictor of electoral support than the incumbent's party identification. In addition to its direct effects, I show that constituent trust indirectly influences electoral support because of its causal relationship to incumbent popularity.

One of the most important, but neglected, variables in the study of Congress is constituent trust.[1] "When a constituent trusts a House member, the constituent is saying something like this: 'I am willing to put myself in your hands temporarily; I know you will have opportunities to hurt me, although I may not know when those opportunities occur; I assume—and I will continue to assume until it is proven otherwise—that you will not hurt me; for the time being, then, I'm not going to worry about your behavior' " (Fenno, 1978:55–56). In short, con-

GLENN R. PARKER is Professor of Political Science and a member of the Policy Sciences Program at Florida State University. An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the 1987 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, 3–6 September 1987. The author expresses appreciation to Dale Fodness for his assistance in the analysis. This analysis has benefitted from the comments and advice of Richard Fenno, Morris Fiorina, and Leroy Rieselbach. None of these scholars, however, bears any responsibility for the interpretations or conclusions presented in this paper.

[1] For example, Hinckley's (1980a) precise summary of past research on congressional elections and the theoretical and empirical advances resulting from the 1978 American National Election Study makes no mention of constituent trust as a critical variable in past, present, or future studies of congressional elections.

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stituent trust reflects the level of confidence that constituents have in their elected representative. The effort that congressmen devote to generating trust, the saliency of trust in voter images of their representative, and the logical relationship between constituent trust and electoral support attest to the significance of this variable. Richard Fenno's account of the behavior of congressmen in their districts calls attention to the amount of time that incumbents devote to cultivating the trust of their constituents:

> It is not an overnight or a one-time thing. It is hard to win; and it must be constantly renewed and rewon. "Trust," said one member, "is a cumulative thing, a totality thing. . . . You do a little here and a little there." So it takes an enormous amount of time to build and to maintain constituent trust. That is what House members believe. And that is why they spend so much of their working time at home. Much of what I have observed in my travels can be explained as a continuous and continuing effort to win (for new members) and to hold (for old members) the trust of supportive constituencies. (Fenno, 1978:56)

The saliency of trust in constituent perceptions of their congressman might be expected simply as a result of what Fenno (1978:56) calls the "ceaseless effort to reinforce the underpinnings of trust" on the part of incumbents; such repetition and emphasis seem certain to influence voter cognitions. In addition, trust has intrinsic value for the individual constituent, apart from the emphasis that congressmen place on it. After all, trust is basic to the representative–constituent relationship. As Fenno (1978:56) notes, "for their part constituents must rely upon trust. They must 'accept on faith' that the congressman is what he says he is and will do what he says he will do."

In Table 1 we present data drawn from the American National Election Studies of 1978–84 that describe the nature of voter likes and dislikes about their congressman. Trust is an important component in constituent perceptions of their representative; it overshadows such basic political concerns as leadership qualities, party, ideology, and political issues, and it follows closely behind the incumbent's experience and personal qualities in most years. Whether because of the emphasis that congressmen place on generating trust or because of the intrinsic value that it has for constituents, trust is a salient component in voter images of their congressman.

Finally, constituent trust is important because of its logical relationship to elections. Simply put, voters can be expected to "throw the rascal out" once they have lost confidence in their representative. As a result, loss of trust can be viewed as promoting anti-incumbent voting, at least with respect to congressional races. Despite the logic of this proposition, there is little systematic evidence that critical declines in constituent trust trigger revolts against incumbents. Such revolts are

Table 1. Voter Likes and Dislikes of Their Representative, 1978–84

Content of Likes and Dislikes	Democratic Incumbent				Republican Incumbent			
	1978	1980	1982	1984	1978	1980	1982	1984
Experience	21.0%	14.6%	14.3%	15.7%	22.1%	18.3%	15.3%	17.6%
Trust	13.2	12.6	10.4	10.2	11.9	10.3	11.0	11.7
Leadership qualities	3.1	2.4	3.6	3.4	2.3	2.0	3.3	3.7
Constituency attention	23.9	25.5	22.3	19.4	18.3	21.9	17.9	19.9
Personal qualities	16.6	16.8	17.8	22.4	17.6	17.8	19.6	16.5
Party connections	3.4	4.4	5.6	3.7	4.1	6.9	10.0	6.6
Ideology	3.5	4.7	4.1	3.7	7.4	5.7	4.0	6.0
Domestic policy	4.7	7.3	8.1	5.4	5.7	5.2	5.8	5.7
Foreign policy	1.0	1.4	0.7	1.6	0.7	1.2	1.5	1.8
Group connections	5.3	6.2	8.7	8.5	5.2	6.2	7.5	4.4
Miscellaneous	4.2	3.9	4.4	6.1	4.6	4.4	4.0	6.2
Total responses	1,088	834	749	1,203	754	562	602	564

SOURCE: University of Michigan, American National Election Studies, 1978–84. Data based upon the response of voters in districts where the congressional race is contested by an incumbent.

often attributed to the appearance of attractive challengers who prompt voter defections (Hinckley, 1980b), or to potent national economic forces (Fiorina, 1978; Kuklinski and West, 1981) that stimulate declines in voter support. Perhaps constituent trust cushions the election margins of incumbents against the external shocks associated with such forces. One of the major objectives of this paper is to examine this neglected variable and to demonstrate that the linkage between constituent trust and voting in congressional elections is unusually strong.

Problems in Studying Constituent Trust

If constituent trust is an important variable, why has it received so little empirical attention? There are at least two reasons: First, the relevance of constituent trust in the study of Congress is a recent finding, illuminated by Richard Fenno's (1978) work on congressmen's home styles and their emphasis on constituent trust in their actions and "messages." Second, and perhaps more important, is the lack of data for studying constituent trust.

The University of Michigan's American National Election Studies have measured voters' general trust in *government* since the 1950s. The effort has resulted in the formation of a fairly reliable scale of citizen trust in government. There are, however, at least two problems in using this scale to measure constituent trust in members of Congress. First, there is no "filter question" accompanying the scale that could be used to distinguish between voters who are concerned about trust and those who feel indifferent about it. That is, trust may be a nonattitude for some individuals—they have no well-formed opinions or preferences. By soliciting respondents' opinions on questions designed to measure trust, we may be mixing together those with clear opinions and those who have never given the question a thought but who are stimulated to respond because of the nature of the survey interview. Opinion surveys frequently include filter questions to eliminate those respondents who lack knowledge of an issue or who have given the question insufficient thought to form a meaningful opinion. In the absence of such a filtering process, we have no way of knowing the salience of trust in the evaluations and perceptions of voters.[2]

[2] RePass makes a similar argument with regard to the measurement of the effect of political issues on voting in presidential elections: "When a respondent can reply only with a simple 'agree' or 'disagree,' it is difficult to tell whether the interview question has elicited merely a fleeting reaction to an issue that is of little or no concern to the respondent, or whether the respondent views it as being truly salient. . . . If we wish to know how issues affect behavior, we must first find out which issues are salient to individual voters" (RePass, 1971:391).

Second, the standard trust in government scale is less useful because the referent in these trust questions is either "the government" or "people running the government," and no reference is made specifically to congressional incumbents. Therefore, we have no assurance that trust in the congressman is what the scale measures. It seems more likely that diffuse attitudes toward the political system in general, rather than constituent trust, are measured by the standard trust questions. Furthermore, we know that people differentiate between government institutions, like Congress, and congressmen in their evaluations (Parker and Davidson, 1979). In short, the absence of questions directly relevant to the measurement of constituent trust has created obstacles to its study.

A national survey that included a battery of questions relevant for measuring the confidence of constituents in the actions of their representative and was accompanied by a means to determine the saliency of trust in voter attitudes would be the optimal method for addressing this question; however, such survey data do not exist. Rather than ignoring the study of constituent trust because of the lack of questions specifically designed for this purpose, I suggest an alternative strategy for attacking this question. By using data on voter dislikes and likes about their congressman we can isolate respondents for whom trust is a salient consideration. That is, we can assume that trust is salient to constituents who make spontaneous reference to it in evaluating their congressman.

There are at least two advantages to this strategy. First, by using the mention of trust to screen respondents, we can differentiate between those who feel that trust is an important concern and those who value other attributes of the congressman, like constituency attention or experience. Second, since the likes and dislikes of voters refer to their own representative, we can be reasonably certain that any mention of trust is directed toward the respondent's own congressman. Thus, by using the open-ended likes/dislikes questions to measure levels of constituent trust, we can approximate the ideal situation where questions are designed specifically to capture respondents' feelings toward their congressmen and to determine the importance of those feelings in their evaluations.

One problem with this analytic strategy is that the number of voters mentioning trust as something they liked or disliked about their congressman in any single survey is relatively small. This creates problems in estimating the parameters of the explanatory variables. To compensate for the low number of respondents, the cross-sectional data for three national surveys conducted between 1978 and 1984 are pooled to obtain a sufficient number of respondents who have mentioned trust in their likes/dislikes.[3] This ensures a large enough sample (539 cases) to obtain reliable estimates of the causes and effects of constituent trust. Therefore, only respondents who mentioned trust as something they like or dislike about their congressman are included in the analysis.

Creating a Measure of Constituent Trust

As noted, the measurement of constituent trust is based upon the responses of voters in national opinion surveys in 1978, 1980, and 1984 to a series of questions asking them to describe the things they like and dislike about their congressman. Respondents mentioning some element of trust as something liked or disliked about their representative are selected for study. The responses categorized as reflecting constituent trust, along with their frequency of mention, are listed in Table 2. Generally, distrusting responses refer to the incumbent's pursuit of self-interest, lack of integrity (principles), untrustworthiness, dishonesty, or lack of independence (controlled by political bosses or parties); constituent trust is reflected in responses that are the opposite of these (e.g., honesty, trustworthiness, integrity).

While the categorization of open-ended responses is always somewhat subjective, our effort to identify trusting and distrusting comments is guided by the nature of the standard trust in government questions. The useful properties of this scale, such as its predictive validity and reliability, provide the rationale for using these items as a guide to classifying trusting and distrusting responses.[4] It provides

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[3] Since the 1982 survey altered the form of one of the variables central to the analysis—strength of incumbent electoral support—I have used only three of the four surveys (1978, 1980, 1984) so that comparability across survey questions would be ensured. Before pooling these data, I examined the slopes for the variables in each equation examined in the analysis. Since there were rather slight differences in most cases between individual slopes across the three surveys, the data from these surveys were pooled. For an excellent discussion of the design and analysis of pooled cross-sectional data, see Stimson, 1985.

[4] The following questions are used to create the trust in government scale:

1. Do you think that people in government waste a lot of money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?
2. How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?
3. Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?
4. Do you feel that *almost* all of the people running the government are smart people who usually know what they are doing, or do you think that quite a few of them don't seem to know what they are doing?
5. Do you think that quite a few of the people running the government are a little

some assurance that the responses used as indicators of constituent trust reflect the same underlying concept—trust. For example, the responses categorized as reflecting constituent distrust capture the content of the items included as measurements of distrust in the standard trust in government scale: government officials are crooked, are run by interests looking out for themselves, cannot be trusted to do what is right, and are undeniably self-interested.

The constituent trust index is operationalized by subtracting the number of distrusting responses from the number of trusting responses. This calculation results in an index of constituent trust that ranges from a high of +2 to a low of −3. The frequency of high trust responses on this measure suggests that constituents maintain fairly high levels of confidence in their congressman: 78% of the respondents expressing a trusting or distrusting response gave more trusting evaluations of their congressman than distrusting ones.[5] This finding is consistent with Richard Fenno's observation that congressmen are persistently concerned about levels of constituent trust and make concerted efforts to maintain and boost that trust (Fenno, 1978:55–60). Such high levels of constituent trust suggest that the effort is quite successful.

How valid is this measure of constituent trust? One way of evaluating its validity is to examine its relationship to other variables that are hypothetically and logically linked to trust. Table 3 shows the correlations between constituent trust and the perceived helpfulness of the

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> crooked, not very many are, or do you think hardly any of them are crooked at all?

One variable included in the standard trust in government index that is ignored as a guide in selecting responses for inclusion in the constituent trust index is the question regarding the intelligence of the incumbent. This survey question tends to be the least reliable of all of the variables normally included in the trust in government scale (see S. Parker, 1986) and therefore is a less dependable guide for selecting items reflecting trust.

[5] Trust was mentioned infrequently in respondent likes and dislikes about the incumbent's challenger. The distribution of respondents on the trust measure is as follows:

Net Number of Trusting Responses	%
2	4%
1	74
0	2
−1	18
−2, −3	2
N	539

We should point out that recent research has demonstrated a proincumbent bias in National Election Study surveys since 1978 (Eubanks and Gow, 1983; Gow and Eubanks, 1984). This may exaggerate the level of constituent trust uncovered in the pooling of these surveys.

Table 2. Content, Distribution, and Frequency of Positive and Negative References to Trust, NES, 1978–84

Code Number	Response	Year of Survey			Total
		1978	1980	1984	
Positive References to Trust					
213	Dependable, trustworthy, reliable; a man you can trust with the responsibilities of government	4	4	12	20
224	Has fulfilled/kept (campaign) promises		7	5	12
307	People have confidence in him		3	4	7
314	Not a politician; not in politics; above politics; not part of Washington crowd	7	4	8	19
315	Independent; no one runs him; his own boss	4	5	1	10
401	Honest, sincere; keeps promises; man of integrity; means what he says; not tricky, open/candid; straightforward; fair	140	84	89	313
403	Man of high principles/ideals; high moral purpose		4	6	10
409	Doesn't use office for personal benefit; not in office to maximize personal benefit	1	1	1	3
503	Not controlled by party regulars/bosses	2			2
709	Good for country; has country's interests at heart; not just out for self/own best interests	33	5	16	54

Negative References to Trust					
214	Undependable, untrustworthy, unreliable; a man you can't trust with the responsibilities of government			3	3
225	Has not fulfilled/kept (campaign) promises	3	5	2	10
308	People don't have confidence in him	1			1
313	A politician/political person; (too) much in politics; politically motivated, part of Washington crowd; just wants to be reelected	8	6	9	23
316	Not independent; run by others; not his own man/boss	4	1		5
402	Dishonest, insincere; breaks promises; no integrity; doesn't mean what he says; tricky; not open/candid; not straightforward	19	17	15	51
404	Lacks principles/ideals		1		1
410	In office (uses office) for personal benefits (junket trips, big salary, other perks)	7	7	9	23
502	Controlled by party regulars/bosses, machine		1	8	9
710	Bad for country; doesn't have country's interests at heart; only looking out for his own interests	1	1	1	3

Source: University of Michigan, American National Election Studies, 1978–84. Data based upon the responses of voters in districts where the congressional race is contested by an incumbent.

Table 3. Correlations Between Constituent Trust and Perceptions of Helpfulness and Voting Agreement (Pearson Product–Moment Correlations)

Variable	1978	1980	1982	1984
Perceived helpfulness[a]	.47	.42	.49	.42
Perceived voting agreement[b]	.33		.41	

SOURCE: University of Michigan, American National Election Studies, 1978–84.

[a] Question wording: "If you had a problem that Representative (name of incumbent) could do something about, do you think (he/she) would be very helpful, somewhat helpful, or not very helpful to you?"

[b] Question wording: "Now we would like to know how much you generally agree of disagree with the way (name of House incumbent) has voted on bills that have come up in the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington. Looking at this list, would you say you agree, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree with the way (he/she) has voted on bills, or haven't you thought much about this?" This question was not asked in the 1980 and 1984 studies.

respondent's congressman, and between trust and the extent to which the respondent agrees with the votes cast by his or her congressman. We expect that respondents with high levels of trust will more frequently perceive their congressman as being helpful (if called upon) and as voting as they would like. As Table 3 indicates, trusting respondents are indeed more likely to perceive their congressman as helpful and as casting votes in tune with constituent opinion: there are substantial positive correlations between constituent trust and perceptions of helpfulness and voting agreement. These predicted relationships support the contention that the measure of constituent trust is valid.

A Causal Model of Constituent Trust and Electoral Support

We hypothesize that constituent trust influences voting in congressional elections in at least two major ways: constituent trust is linked to the popularity of incumbents and is associated with the strength of their electoral support. The causal relationship between constituent trust and incumbent popularity is based on the assumption that voters for whom trust is salient rely heavily on it when evaluating their representative. That is, congressmen who are trusted by their constituents receive positive overall evaluations (they're popular with voters), while representatives who are distrusted receive negative overall evaluations (they're unpopular with their constituents).[6] Incumbent popularity, in turn, influences candidate choice in congressional elections (Parker, 1980). Thus, constituent trust indirectly affects voting in House elections by influencing the popularity of congressmen, which in turn shapes vote choice. Incumbent popularity is measured by the standard "feeling thermometer" question included in the national surveys.[7]

It might seem tautological to say that incumbent popularity is causally linked to electoral support since successful incumbents are, by definition, popular with their constituents, or else they would no longer be incumbents. On the other hand, popularity can be viewed theoretically and conceptually as an intervening mechanism (construct) that converts the home-style activities of incumbents into increments of electoral support. That is, congressmen act to promote their popularity among their constituents and, therefore, their future electoral safety.

Constituent trust is directly linked to incumbent electoral support by a simple mechanism: when voters lose confidence in their congressman, they seek a replacement. The result is a loss in the incumbent's electoral support. Therefore, we expect a causal relationship between constituent trust and electoral support for the incumbent. The strength of incumbent electoral support is measured by the respondents' votes in the congressional election and the degree to which they felt strongly about that choice.[8]

In sum, we expect constituent trust to influence voting directly in congressional elections and to influence electoral choice indirectly by influencing the popularity of incumbents. Additional theoretically important predictors of electoral choice and incumbent popularity are introduced into explanatory (regression) equations along with the measurement of constituent trust to ensure that the impact of trust is not merely capturing the effects of important variables excluded from the equations. Thus, party identification[9] is causally related to the strength of electoral support for the incumbent as well as to incumbent popularity. In addition, the perceived home attentiveness of the incumbent[10] and the respondent's personal contacts with the incumbent[11] are linked to incumbent popularity.

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[6] An assumption in this analysis is that trust causes popularity. Other equally tenable assumptions include the propositions that popularity causes trust or that a reciprocal causal relationship operates between these two variables. Different assumptions, of course, can produce different results. The assumption employed in this analysis was selected because of past research that has demonstrated that members behave in ways designed to make themselves popular with their constituents (Fenno, 1978; Parker and Davidson, 1979; Parker, 1981, 1986). Since incumbents emphasize trust in their constituency presentations and behavior, constituent trust can be assumed to precede the popularity of incumbents rather than vice versa. Whatever the causal relationship between constituent trust and incumbent popularity, it will not alter the findings regarding the direct influence of trust on electoral support—the major focus of this study.

[7] Respondents are asked to record how they feel toward the Democratic and Republican candidates in the congressional race on a scale that ranges from 0 to 100, with 100 representing the most positive feelings and 0 representing the least positive feelings. Some measure of incumbent popularity is included in many models of congressional elections, but the term may differ from study to study. For instance, Jacobson (1983) uses measurements of likes and dislikes about the incumbent in his models. These measures are conceptually and empirically related. I refer to all such measures of positive or negative attitudes toward an incumbent as reflecting his or her popularity among constituents.

[8] Incumbent electoral support is measured in the following manner: strong preference for incumbent = 4, not a strong preference for incumbent = 3, not a strong preference for challenger = 2, strong preference for challenger = 1.

While party identification may have lost some of its potency in explaining voting in congressional elections (Ferejohn, 1977), it remains an important influence on candidate choice in House contests. For instance, party identification shapes the popularity of incumbents because voters tend to have more positive attitudes toward representatives who have party loyalties that are identical to their own. Shared identification ensures that there exists some degree of compatability between the policy "tastes" (preferences) of constituents and those of their congressman. That is, Democratic identifiers have more positive attitudes toward Democratic, rather than Republican, office holders; conversely, Republican loyalists have more favorable attitudes toward Republican congressmen than Democratic ones. Thus, the exclusion of party identification from any model predicting voter choice would almost certainly produce misspecification.

Past research also demonstrates that personal contact with the incumbent, and perceptions of district attention, influence the popularity

[9] Congruence in party identification is measured in terms of a seven-point scale: strongly identified with incumbent's party = 0, weakly identified with incumbent's party = 1, leaning toward identification with incumbent's party = 2, no partisan identification (independent) = 3, leaning toward identification with challenger's party = 4, weakly identified with challenger's party = 5, strongly identified with challenger's party = 6.

[10] Perceived district attention is measured by subtracting the number of negative comments ("dislikes") about the incumbent's attention to district affairs from the number of positive references ("likes") to the service the incumbent has provided to constituents. District attention is a category for classifying the comments from the open-ended likes/dislikes questions asked about congressional candidates. The category includes mention of personally assisting people in the district, soliciting district opinion, representing those views in Congress, keeping people informed about the operations of government, and helping the district's economy. The NES codes for this category are 321 to 397. District attention is conceptualized as a summary impression of the extent to which a congressman is perceived by constituents as looking after or caring about the district, although attention to the district encompasses several distinct dimensions (see Bond, 1985).

[11] Personal contact is measured in terms of a four-point scale which records the types of personal contact that a respondent has had with his or her congressman: met Representative, attended a meeting or gathering where Representative spoke, talked to a member of the Representative's office staff, and received mail from Representative. A respondent receives 1 point for each form of contact with the incumbent.

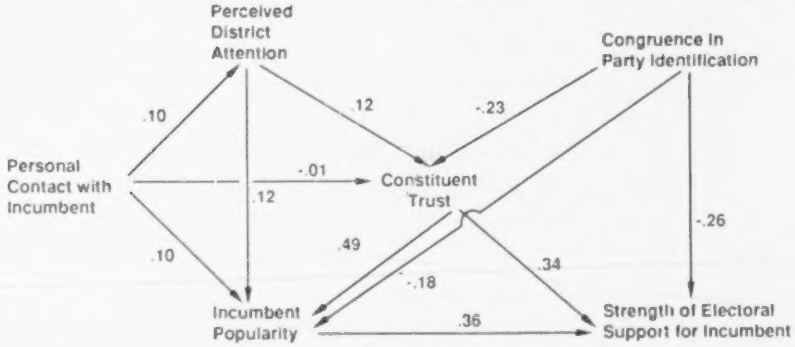
Perceived District Attention
Congruence in Party Identification
.10
.12
-.23
Personal Contact with Incumbent
-.01
Constituent Trust
.12
-.26
.10
.49
.34
-.18
Incumbent Popularity
.36
Strength of Electoral Support for Incumbent

Figure 1. Causal Model of the Role of Constituent Trust in Congressional Elections, 1978–84 (Standardized Regression Coefficients)

of incumbents (G. Parker, 1981). Personal contacts provide incumbents with opportunities to "feather their nests" by disseminating messages that enhance their esteem among constituents. The more frequent the contact, the greater the repetition of the home-style messages and the more likely that constituents internalize a positive image of the incumbent. The result is higher levels of incumbent popularity. Similarly, displays of concern and attention to district affairs promote favorable constituent perceptions and enhance the incumbent's popularity among voters (G. Parker, 1981).

These hypothesized linkages are shown by causal arrows in Figure 1. Some of the same variables that influence incumbent electoral support and popularity are also causally related to constituent trust. By being attentive to constituent problems and concerns, for example, congressmen are able to promote constituent trust. Congressmen who don't "forget" about their constituents once they depart for Washington are likely to maintain the trust of voters. Since congressmen in general are viewed by voters as unresponsive (G. Parker, 1986:121), incumbents who make a point of emphasizing their service to the district seem certain of winning the trust of their constituents. Likewise, congressmen who maintain extensive contact with their constituents can be expected to increase their levels of constituent trust:

> Qualification, identification, and empathy are all helpful in the building of constituent trust. To a large degree these three impressions are conveyed by the very fact of regular personal contact. That is, "I prove to you that I am qualified," or "I prove to you that I am one of you," or "I prove to you that I understand you," by coming around frequently to let you see me, to see you and to meet with you. If, on the other hand, I failed to come home to see and be seen, to talk and be talked to, then you would have some reason to worry about trusting me. (Fenno, 1978:60)

Finally, a similarity of party identification between incumbents and their constituents can also promote trust. Voters tend to have greater confidence in those congressmen who share the same loyalties. When a congressman represents the opposition party, constituents with a contrasting party affiliation have reason to question the extent to which the representative will be responsive to their opinions; these constituents may be apprehensive about trusting their congressman.[12] In sum, constituent trust can be linked to the perceived attentiveness of incumbents, voter contacts with them, and the congruence between the partisan attachments of constituents and their congressmen. These interrelationships can be described in terms of a causal model relating constituent trust to incumbent popularity and electoral support.

There are three major endogenous variables in the model: constituent trust, incumbent popularity, and strength of electoral support for the incumbent. The explanatory equations assume the following forms:

$$\begin{aligned} T &= a + p_1A + p_2C + p_3I + e_t, \\ P &= a + p_4A + p_5C + p_6T + p_7I + e_p, \\ S &= a + p_8T + p_9P + p_{10}I + e_s, \end{aligned}$$

where

T = constituent trust,
A = perceived district attention,
C = personal contact with incumbent,
I = similarity in party identification between voter and congressman,
P = incumbent popularity,
S = strength of electoral support for incumbent.

The p's are the path coefficients (standardized regression coefficients) associated with the hypothesized causal linkages. The interrelationships among the variables in the model are subjected to path analysis and estimated through OLS regression.

Model Estimates

The parameters (path coefficients) in the model are displayed in Figure 1; all of the parameters are significant at the .01 level, except for the relationship between personal contact with the incumbent and con-

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[12] For example, Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina (1984:118) note that party identification influences constituent expectations of access and assistance: "identifiers with the incumbent's party are the most sanguine about the likelihood that he or she would help in a pinch."

Table 4. Direct and Indirect Effects of Constituent Trust and Congruence in Party Identification on Strength of Electoral Support

Variable	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Constituent trust	.34	.18	.52
Congruence in party identification	−.26	−.18[a]	−.44

[a] Excludes paths through unanalyzed correlations.

stituent trust (p_2 = −.01). Personal contact appears to have no significant direct influence on constituent trust, contrary to expectation and Fenno's conjecture; however, it indirectly influences constituent trust by promoting perceptions of incumbent attention to the district which, in turn, influences trust. The sizable effect of constituent trust on incumbent support and popularity indicates that trust is a major influence on congressional elections. The impact of constituent trust on incumbent popularity is indeed impressive: its direct effect (p_6 = .49) is considerably larger than that associated with party identification (p_7 = −.18), perceived district attention (p_4 = .12), or personal contact with the incumbent (p_5 = .10). Moreover, the direct influence of constituent trust on electoral support (p_8 = .34) is greater than the effect of a widely acknowledged potent predictor of candidate choice in congressional elections—party identification (p_{10} = −.26). Finally, the model of incumbent electoral support compares favorably in terms of explained variation (R^2 = .56) with those developed in previous research, especially given the limited number of predictors in this model.[13]

It should also be noted that although party identification may have lost some of its influence on voting in congressional elections, its indirect effect bolsters its significance; the indirect effect of party identification is identical to the indirect effect associated with constituent trust (Table 4). Therefore, party may continue to function as a central variable in the study of congressional elections because of its influence on constituent trust: the compound paths between party identification and electoral support that involve constituent trust ($p_3p_6p_9 + p_3p_8 = -.12$) account for two-thirds of the indirect effects of party ($-.18$) and 27% of its total effect ($-.44$) on electoral support.

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[13] For instance, Jacobson's (1983:103–104) study of congressional elections develops models for predicting voting in House elections with R^2s of .62 in 1978 and .58 in 1980 for a nine-variable explanatory model. Hinckley (1980) reports an R^2 of .43 for a four-variable model of voting in the 1978 House elections. There are some relationships that are statistically insignificant in my model and therefore are not reported. For instance, media contact (in contrast to personal contact) with the incumbent has no significant influence on constituent trust or strength of electoral support; similarly, personal contact has no significant influence on electoral support.

Comparing Constituent Trust to Other Dimensions of Candidate Evaluation

Constituent trust may be a unique component of candidate evaluation with respect to its effect on electoral support since it is a better predictor of electoral support than other relevant dimensions of candidate evaluation. To demonstrate this, I have pooled respondents mentioning the personal characteristics of incumbents in their evaluations into one data set, respondents mentioning the incumbent's experience into another data set, and respondents mentioning the representative's leadership qualities into a third separate data set; the process mirrors the procedures followed in pooling respondents mentioning constituent trust in their evaluations.[14] These evaluative dimensions—personal characteristics, experience, and leadership qualities—are, like trust, conveyed through the home-style presentations of congressmen, their presentation of self (Fenno, 1978:57–60).[15]

Of these evaluative dimensions—constituent trust, leadership qualities, experience, and personal characteristics—it is clear that constituent trust is the most important influence on electoral support (Table 5). The simple correlation between constituent trust and electoral support is considerably larger ($r = .60$) than the observed correlation between leadership qualities and electoral support ($r = .37$) or between personal characteristics and electoral support ($r = .41$). Furthermore, constituent trust has a stronger direct relationship to electoral support than the personal characteristics, experience, or leadership qualities of incumbents when these variables are substituted into identical equations (Table 5, standardized regression coefficients). In sum, constituent trust is perhaps the most electorally potent component of candidate evaluation, and its effect on electoral support is not simply a function of the pooling of the data or the nature of affective responses. Unfortunately, we can only account for a small proportion of the variation in constituent trust; the coefficient of multiple determi-

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[14] These variables were constructed in the same way as the measurement of constituent trust (i.e., number of positive references minus number of negative references).

[15] Since these home-style presentations tend to parallel the messages that incumbents deliver in their election campaigns (see, for instance, Jones, 1966), these messages also have the potential to influence electoral support.

Table 5. Comparing the Effects of Salient Dimensions of Candidate Evaluation on Electoral Support

Variables in Equation	Simple Correlations with Electoral Support	Partial Standardized Regression Coefficients	R^2
Personal characteristics	.41	.23	
Party identification	−.37	−.21	
Incumbent popularity	.58	.43	
$N = 467$			.42
Leadership qualities	.37	.12[a]	
Party identification	−.62	−.42	
Incumbent popularity	.66	.41	
$N = 74$			.57
Experience	.44	.19	
Party identification	−.36	−.19	
Incumbent popularity	.65	.52	
$N = 531$			.49
Constituent trust	.60	.34	
Party identification	−.47	−.26	
Incumbent popularity	.64	.36	
$N = 329$			.56
Honesty/integrity	.63	.38	
Party identification	−.52	−.32	
Incumbent popularity	.63	.30	
$N = 231$			.59

[a] Not significant at .01 level.

nation equals .27 (Table 6). Obviously, more attention needs to be given to the explanation of constituent trust in future analyses.[16]

Honesty is a prominent aspect of how incumbents present themselves and a major component of trust (Fenno, 1978). Indeed, the largest number of responses classified as trusting or distrusting made reference to the honesty and integrity of the incumbent congressman.

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[16] One reason why we may have been unable to account for more of the variation in constituent trust is that trust is related to the behavior of congressmen, and there are few variables in these opinion surveys that are valid measures of that behavior (for example, the content of constituent communications and district presentations). As Fenno has noted, it is the behavior of the incumbent that creates trust. If constituent trust, in fact, is related to the behavior of congressmen, then the absence of measurements of that behavior will leave a large proportion of the variation in constituent trust unexplained. In short, some potentially important explanatory variables have gone unmeasured in present opinion studies of congressional elections.

Table 6. Regression Statistics for Causal Model

Dependent Variable	Coefficient of Multiple Determination	R^2	N
Constituent trust	.27	.07	534
Incumbent popularity	.61	.37	525
Strength of electoral support for incumbent	.75	.56	329

While some of the responses previously identified as reflecting trust might be open to challenge, references to the honesty of the congressman can be used as indications of constituent trust with less apprehension. Therefore, pooling references to the honesty or dishonesty of incumbents and executing the analysis with this restricted pool of respondents provides another test of the hypothesized relationship between constituent trust and electoral support; basing the trust index only on mentions of honesty or dishonesty should reduce uncertainty regarding the impact of trust on electoral choice that might stem from questions about the external validity of certain responses as indicators of trust.

Repeating the analysis with this restricted pool of trusting and distrusting respondents fails to alter previous conclusions: constituent trust continues to influence electoral support and is a better predictor of voting than party identification. Table 5 presents the parameter estimates for the effect of constituent trust on electoral support using both definitions of trust—the more inclusive definition reflecting the content of the general trust in government scale, and the more restricted definition of trust as honesty and integrity. It is clear from this table that whether measured in terms of honesty and integrity or defined in broader terms, constituent trust exercises a significant and substantial influence on electoral support.

In sum, this analysis has examined a neglected variable in the study of congressional elections—constituent trust. We have demonstrated that when constituent trust is salient in the perceptions of voters, it can shape the evaluations (popularity) of incumbents and the strength of candidate support.[17] In this manner, constituent trust exercises a pro-found influence on voting in congressional elections. The direct and indirect effects of constituent trust on electoral support make constituent trust a potent predictor of candidate choice in congressional elections.[18] Clearly, more attention needs to be given to the analysis of the causes of constituent trust, especially in light of the rather low R^2 obtained in predicting constituent trust. Our three-variable model for predicting candidate choice in congressional elections (constituent trust, congruence in party identification, and incumbent popularity as predictors of candidate choice) performs quite well, explaining 56% of the variation in candidate support.

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[17] The requirement that only references to trust be used in calculating a respondent's score on the constituent trust index can be relaxed by assigning a neutral (zero) score (i.e., indifferent about trusting their representative) to all respondents who can recognize their representative (i.e., able to cite at least one like or dislike about their congressman) but make no reference to trust. Despite this modification of the trust index, the relationship between constituent trust and strength of electoral support continues to be highly

Implications

Several implications for the study of congressional elections and the constituency behavior of congressmen flow from this analysis. First, the representatives' emphasis on maintaining the trust of their constituents is a wise strategy that assures them the esteem and gratitude of their constituents. These attitudes both directly and indirectly affect the strength of future electoral support. Although constituent trust is mentioned less frequently than other home-style messages (e.g., the district attentiveness of the incumbent or his or her experience in office), this may be the result of the differing mediums through which these messages are transmitted. Trust is primarily a message that is most effectively conveyed when delivered in person (Fenno, 1978:60).[19] Other home-style messages can be effectively transmitted

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statistically significant. The magnitude of this relationship declines, however, as does the predictive capacity of the equation explaining electoral support; these reductions underscore the relevance of *saliency* to the influence of constituent trust on voting in congressional elections.

[18] There is evidence to suggest that likes/dislikes about a congressman are related to voting decisions (Jacobson, 1983). This might lead to the conclusion that the findings reported in this paper only support the contention that well-liked congressmen are reelected. Since the popularity of the congressman is included in the equation predicting electoral support, and its influence is thereby controlled, the reported effect of constituent trust on such support is independent of the popularity of the respondent's congressman. Furthermore, as the equation predicting incumbent popularity reveals, there is no one-to-one relationship between incumbent popularity and constituent trust; constituent trust contributes to levels of incumbent popularity just as it contributes to an incumbent's level of electoral support, but there is no reason to believe that any of the three variables is an easy substitute for the others. In short, the empirical evidence supports the conceptual distinction made between popularity, electoral support, and constituent trust. Well-liked incumbents are likely to retain their congressional seats, but so are those who maintain high levels of constituent trust.

[19] About 40% of those mentioning trust as something liked or disliked about their congressman had either personally met the incumbent or attended a meeting or gathering where the incumbent spoke. In short, respondents included in this study experienced an unusual level of personal contact with their congressman.

through newsletters, media coverage, and legislator–constituent correspondence, as well as through the congressman's appearance before constituents. The greater the number of channels for disseminating the other home-style messages (like the attention paid to the district or admirable personal characteristics) probably increases the salience of these themes in voter perceptions of their congressman.

However, the frequency of the congressman's message may be less important than its capacity to increase electoral support at home. If every constituent could recall a congressman's efforts to help the district, but that message had only a small effect on the subsequent vote, an incumbent would gain little. On the other hand, if a message were received infrequently because of the requirement that it be delivered personally, but it had a major impact on candidate choice, the incumbent would benefit greatly despite the limited audience reached by these messages. Constituent trust qualifies as just this latter type of message.

This observation leads to a second implication. Of the three components of home styles—allocation of resources, presentation of self, and explanation of Washington activity (Fenno, 1978)—presentation of self may be the most critical because of its capacity to generate constituent trust. Fenno (1978:60) views the presentation of self as the "centerpiece" of a member's home style, with good reason. Not only does this activity absorb a lot of a member's time, but it may carry with it profitable electoral effects.

Constituent trust is important to all congressmen, regardless of the nature of their constituencies or their levels of electoral security, but it is especially critical for minority-party congressmen because of the need to expand voter coalitions to include members from the opposition. Thus, congressmen elected from opposition party strongholds (politically atypical members) have reason to downplay their party identification because dissimilarities in party loyalties incline many constituents to distrust their representative. Trust takes considerable time to nurture, and the congressman who is politically atypical will have a hard time winning over constituents who feel that the opposition party's candidates cannot be trusted. By claiming "independence" from a party, or encouraging constituents to vote for the "man not the party," incumbents diffuse potentially damaging situations. In the process, they boost constituent confidence, enhancing their popularity within the district and strengthening their electoral support.

We normally view the efforts of minority party candidates to obscure their party loyalties as an attempt to weaken partisan ties to the majority party and to promote defections. There is little doubt that such a strategy functions in exactly this way; however, the effort also indirectly aids future reelections by reducing the distrust of party identifiers supporting the opposition candidate. The conversion of these party members to the incumbent's side in future elections may depend upon the congressman's ability to win the trust of these converts by building a personal electoral following, rather than a party organization. Thus the emphasis of incumbents on establishing personal electoral organizations may be a rational response to the demands of building trust among voters. In this light, the decline of parties and partisanship may owe as much to the efforts of congressional incumbents to de-emphasize party in their dealings with constituents as to the diminished value of party loyalties to voters.

The significance of the effects of constituent trust might be dismissed because of the limited number of respondents for whom trust is salient (those who mention trust in their open-ended evaluations of their congressman). It seems more likely, however, that we have underestimated the saliency of trust to voters by restricting the analysis to those respondents who spontaneously mention trust. A less restrictive selection criterion would undoubtedly reveal that constituent trust is considerably more prominent in voter cognitions than we find. Nonetheless, even this minimum estimate of the size of the populace concerned about trust—about 20%[20]—is not so small as to be inconsequential. As Fiorina (1977) has noted, a relatively small shift in voter support can turn a marginal district into a safe one. Certainly the number of respondents mentioning trust could supply such a competitive edge.

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[20] This figure is based on the number of respondents mentioning trust or distrust divided by the number of respondents in these three surveys who mentioned either a like or dislike about their congressman.

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225

MASS AND ELITE ATTITUDES ABOUT WIRETAPPING IN CANADA

IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC THEORY AND POLITICS

JOSEPH F. FLETCHER

Abstract Evidence from a recent study of Canadian attitudes toward civil liberties indicates that the issue of wiretapping presents an important exception to the familiar theory of democratic elitism. Ironically, the very sophistication and knowledge that leads elites to support individual rights and freedoms also makes them more likely to support wiretapping than the Canadian population as a whole.

Over the past several years, the issue of wiretapping has been at the center of a debate regarding the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). This paper—based upon data from a new national study of Canadian attitudes toward civil liberties—explores two questions relevant to this debate: the state of public and elite opinion on the issue of wiretapping and the implications of these attitudes for an understanding of democratic politics.

WIRETAPPING AS A PUBLIC POLICY ISSUE

At issue in the debate over wiretapping has been the appropriate balance between national security needs and the rights and freedoms of

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individuals.[1] Among the most telling criticisms of CSIS have been those put forth in the annual reports of the Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC), which was established under the terms of the 1984 CSIS Act to oversee the activities of the security service. The committee bluntly states that in targeting individuals for surveillance the security service "casts its net too widely" and "takes insufficient account of the potential harm to the principles of personal freedom and privacy" (SIRC, 1987:36–37). Responding to these concerns, the solicitor general formed an independent advisory team to assess whether the operations and management of CSIS met the intelligence needs of the government and whether these needs were effectively balanced by due regard for the rights of individuals.

The report of the independent advisory team (1987) was released at the end of November 1987, and its recommendations were accepted by the government in their entirety. Accordingly, the solicitor general (1987) announced a major reorganization of the priorities and management of the security service, including greater controls on wiretapping and intrusive surveillance generally, elimination of the countersubversion branch of the service, and a host of management changes designed to improve monitoring and control. Whatever the impact of these changes, debate over security intelligence operations in Canada is far from over. Full parliamentary review of the act establishing CSIS is required in 1989.[2] Insofar as the review will be conducted by those near the center of the decision-making process, one would hope that the debate will be continued largely among those with a relatively sophisticated understanding of both the national security and individual liberties issues involved. Yet the central finding reported in this paper casts doubt over whether this hope will be realized.

Evidence from a recent survey of Canadian attitudes toward civil liberties indicates that the issue of wiretapping presents an important exception to the familiar theory of democratic elitism. Ironically, it seems that the very sophistication and knowledge that leads elites to support individual rights and freedoms also makes them more likely than the Canadian population as a whole to support wiretapping.

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[1] At times CSIS has appeared to protect neither national security nor individual rights in using its wiretapping powers. For example, in September 1987 a federal court of appeal in British Columbia learned that CSIS had used false information to support an application for a wiretap warrant in a case involving conspiracy to murder a visiting Indian cabinet minister (*Globe and Mail*, 12 September 1987, A1). This led in quick succession to the sudden resignation of the CSIS director (*Globe and Mail*, 12 September 1987, A1), the release of the accused (*Globe and Mail*, 16 September 1987, A1), and the announcement of an investigation into every wiretap warrant issued to the service since its inception (*Globe and Mail*, 16 September 1987, A9).

[2] The review is likely to be thorough for in the wake of the 1985 McGrath reforms, Parliamentary review committees can now be fairly independent of the government in their inquiries (Special Committee on Reform of the House of Commons, 1985).

THE THEORY OF DEMOCRATIC ELITISM

Perhaps the most enduring contribution of surveys of attitudes toward civil liberties has been the finding that elites are more supportive than ordinary citizens of democratic rights and freedoms. This was Stouffer's central finding over thirty years ago in his groundbreaking investigation, and it has been corroborated in works by McClosky (1964), Nunn, Crockett, and Williams (1978), McClosky and Brill (1983), Sullivan and Barnum (1987), and others. Upon this finding a theoretical edifice has been erected: the theory of democratic elitism (see Bachrach, 1967). In essence, this theory holds that elite groups serve as major repositories of democratic values in Western democracies. More strongly supportive of ideals of democracy than the general public, elite groups provide an important bulwark against nondemocratic proclivities among the citizenry. Such proclivities were documented by Stouffer, who found the American public to be relatively intolerant and unsupportive of individual rights and freedoms. Fortunately, according to Key (1961), McClosky (1964), and others, those who are most intolerant and least supportive of democratic rights and freedoms are also likely to be without significant political influence. In contrast, those who do have significant influence are more tolerant, more supportive of democratic principles, and more consistent in applying those principles in particular cases. The reason for this difference, it has been suggested (McClosky, 1964; McClosky and Brill, 1983), is that decision makers move in circles where basic democratic values are more salient and intellectual consistency is more often demanded; hence their attitudes are more closely connected to basic democratic values. In short, they are part of an elite group, the "carriers of the democratic creed" (Prothro and Grigg, 1960). As such, they are the group most likely to resist encroachments upon individual rights and freedoms, even where rights and freedoms must be balanced against other values such as national security. In tribute to these qualities, this elite group has been lionized as "guardians of democracy" (cited in Sullivan and Barnum, 1987).

Do these characterizations of mass and elite attitude differences offer an accurate picture of contemporary Canadian society? Are citizens less supportive of individual rights and freedoms than are elite groups when it comes to the issue of wiretapping? As part of a larger investigation of Canadian attitudes toward civil liberties, questions were included in a national survey of both citizens and decision makers conducted in the spring and summer of 1987 which enable us to address these issues.

The Study

The fieldwork was conducted by the Institute for Social Research at York University in Toronto. The survey was administered over the telephone to two samples of respondents using computer-assisted interviewing techniques. The same questionnaire and interviewing procedures were used for each sample. The first sample was of the general population weighted by province to permit regional comparisons. For this sample, respondents were identified through a modified random digit dialing technique using blocks of valid household telephone numbers stratified by province. A further enumeration and random selection process was used to select the respondent from among members of the household. Interviews were conducted in French or English, depending upon the preference of the respondent. Fewer than 1% of the respondents were unable to complete the survey due to language or health problems. The overall response rate was 63.5%, fairly typical for telephone surveys conducted by an academic survey unit (cf. Shanks, Sanchez, and Morton, 1983).[3] The resulting sample (N = 2,084) closely matches basic demographic breakdowns available from Statistics Canada on the 1986 census population.

The second sample (N = 1,348) was of decision makers in the civil liberties area. Individuals were selected to represent the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. The overall response rate was 64.2%. The first component of the decision-maker sample was drawn from the legislative branch of government. Members of federal and provincial parliaments elected between 1979 and 1986 as listed in the *Canadian Parliamentary Guide* formed the population sampled. Selection was fixed across parties and systematic within them.

The executive component of the decision-maker sample was itself composed of two parts. The first consisted of officials from the federal Ministries of the Solicitor General and Justice as well as their provincial equivalents. Respondents were systematically selected from lists drawn up using the *Directory of Justice Personnel*, the *Canadian Law List* of 1986, and the *Canadian Legal Directory* from the same year. The second part of the executive component of the decision-maker sample consisted of police and crown attorneys. The police were drawn one-third from the RCMP, one third from the two provincial forces, the Ontario Provincial Police and Québec Police Force, and a final one-third from officers in four major cities across Canada. Once again selection was systematic. Crown attorneys from across the country were identified using the 1986 *Canadian Law List*, and a sample was drawn.

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[3] The response rate is defined here as the number of completed interviews divided by the estimated number of eligible households times 100% (see Institute for Social Research, 1987).

A legal component of the decision-maker sample was drawn from the population of lawyers in Canada who have been before the bar for more than ten years but less than thirty. This is the population from which judges are drawn. While it may have been desirable to obtain the responses of sitting justices, this was deemed both impractical and questionable ethically since in the wake of Canada's recent Charter of Rights and Freedoms many of the issues touched upon in an attitude survey on civil liberties may come before the same judges for adjudication. Accordingly, the population of senior lawyers served as a surrogate for judges. Senior lawyers were enumerated using the 1986 *Canadian Law List* as well as the data bases of the Law Society of Upper Canada and the Barreau du Québec. Respondents were weighted by province, and a systematic sample was drawn.

Findings

GENERAL NORMS

The data collected indicate that here in Canada, as elsewhere, individuals drawn from elite groups are more supportive of individual rights and freedoms than are the public at large. Witness the results reported in Table 1. The pattern is a familiar one. Respondents from elite groups are more supportive of basic political freedoms and legal rights than are members of the general public.[4] For example, nearly 88% of the decision makers as compared to just over 60% of the citizens are in favor of free speech for radicals and extremists. These data are consistent with the theory of democratic elitism suggesting that decision makers have more thoroughly assimilated democratic norms than the average citizen. Citizens in comparison are less informed about and less willing to support basic rights and freedoms. Support for political rights of extreme and disliked groups, for example, is over 25 points lower amongst the general population sample than it is among the decision

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[4] It is the relative and not the absolute differences between elite and general population responses that are of particular interest here because absolute percentages are sensitive to subtleties of question wording, a point discussed in the next section. Of course, the elite groups here do not constitute a representative sample of elites or decision makers in the sense that the general population sample does. See the discussions by Stouffer (1955: chap. 2) and McClosky and Brill (1983: chap. 6).

Table 1. Political Freedoms and Legal Rights—Citizen and Decision-Maker Attitudes (Percent Agreeing)

		Decision Makers				
	Citizens (2,084)	All (1,348)	Legislative (513)	Legal (352)	Executive (260)	Police (223)
Political freedoms						
Free speech for radicals and extremists	60.8%	88.0%	88.7%	92.0%	93.8%	73.1%
Extreme groups allowed to hold rallies[a]	56.8%	82.4%	85.4%	90.3%	83.8%	61.4%
Least liked group allowed to hold rallies[a]	31.7%	60.4%	65.3%	68.2%	57.9%	40.6%
Legal rights						
Accused has right to silence	40.8%	80.2%	60.4%	93.5%	97.3%	84.8%
Exclude illegally obtained evidence	28.5%	52.7%	45.8%	68.5%	51.2%	45.7%

NOTES: Question wordings are presented in Appendix 1. Citizen data have been weighted.

[a] Item used for wording experiments not reported here. The experiments were identical in both samples and thus do not affect the differences reported.

makers. The differences are as great or greater on questions about legal rights. Knowledge of an accused person's right to remain silent is nearly 40 percentage points lower among the citizens than it is among elites. And endorsement of the exclusionary rule is 25 points lower. Compared with elites, then, citizens are less likely to know about the right to silence and less likely to favor the exclusion of illegally obtained evidence.

Of course, there are important differences among the elite groups too. For example, lawyers usually rank among the most supportive of both legal rights and political freedoms, and police typically take up a position midway between the public and the other elite groups. The important point to note, however, is that each and every one of the decision-maker subgroups is more supportive of these basic rights and freedoms than are the general public. These findings fit smoothly with what we know from American studies of attitudes toward civil liberties (cf. McClosky and Brill, 1983).

WIRETAPPING

What about the issues raised by the debate over wiretapping by the security service? If ordinary citizens are generally less concerned than elites about the rights of the individual, are they thus more willing than elites to support wiretapping? The theory of democratic elitism would suggest as much. As we have just seen, citizens are less supportive of basic rights and freedoms generally, so why should they not also be more willing to permit, indeed encourage, wiretapping by the security service?

Examination of our data indicates that this question is not merely rhetorical. Table 2 presents the results on citizen and decision-maker attitudes toward wiretapping.[5] The finding is precisely the opposite of what one might expect based upon the theory of democratic elitism. The decision makers and not the public evidence higher levels of support for wiretapping. Why should this be the case?

Looking at Table 2 one naturally thinks of the work of Jackman suggesting that mass–elite differences on civil liberties items are

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[5] The question on which these results are based included an experimental variation which will be discussed in the next section. The chi-square is calculated on the substantive responses only. Seventy-nine percent of the interviews with the citizen sample were completed before 11 May 1987, the day on which the first news stories on the SIRC annual report appeared in the press. Before-and-after comparisons revealed no significant differences that could not be accounted for by demographic variables. Approximately 40% of the decision-maker interviews took place prior to 11 May, and once again there are no substantial before-and-after differences. If there were any such differences, they would presumably have lessened the difference between the citizens and decision makers.

Table 2. Should the Security Service Be Able to Wiretap? Citizens vs. Decision Makers

	Citizens (2,084)	Decision Makers (1,348)
Yes	50.6%	66.5%
No	47.4	32.3
DK/refused	2.1	1.2

NOTE: $\chi^2 = 69.23$; $df = 1$; $p = .0000$.

largely due to the greater education of the elites (Jackman, 1972; but see also St. Peter, Williams, and Johnson, 1977; and Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978). This work is of limited relevance in this case, however, for Jackman is concerned to explain why elites are more tolerant, not less tolerant, than the general public. Nevertheless it is instructive to look at the effect of education on attitudes toward wiretapping among the general public. As it turns out, education makes no significant difference. Witness the results in Table 3.

Another possibility is that one or more of the subgroups that compose the decision-maker sample is so overwhelmingly in favor of wiretapping that their views inflate the percentage of "yes" responses for the decision-maker sample as a whole. As we saw in Table 1, after all, there were very substantial differences among the elite groups, with one group, usually the police, taking up a position significantly different from the others. Could such differences within the decision-maker sample account for the findings in Table 2?

There are indeed substantial differences within the decision-maker sample on their responses to the wiretapping question. A glance at Table 4, however, makes it clear that these differences do not explain

Table 3. Should the Security Service Be Able to Wiretap? Citizens by Level of Education

	Less Than High School (602)	High School Graduate (569)	Some Post-Secondary (598)	University Graduate (308)
Yes	51.9%	46.7%	52.3%	50.9%
No	45.3	51.4	46.3	46.7
DK/refused	2.8	1.9	1.3	2.4

Table 4. Should the Security Service Be Able to Wiretap? By Type of Decision Maker

	Legislative					Legal	Executive		
	PC (128)	Lib (150)	NDP (111)	SC (39)	PQ (85)	Lawyers (352)	Crown (156)	Ministry (104)	Police (223)
Yes	73.4%	70.7%	37.8%	79.5%	40.0%	60.8%	76.9%	66.3%	83.4%
No	25.0	28.0	59.5	20.5	58.8	38.4	21.2	32.7	16.1
DK/ref	1.6	1.3	2.7	0.0	1.2	0.9	1.9	1.0	0.4

NOTES: PC = Progressive Conservative; Lib = Liberal; NDP = New Democratic party; SC = Social Credit; PC = Parti Québeçois.

away the greater elite support for wiretapping reported in Table 2. With the notable exceptions of legislative elites from the New Democratic party (NDP) and the Parti Québeçois (PQ), the elite groups are all more supportive of wiretapping than are the citizens.

The exceptions are not hard to explain. Both the NDP, as a social democratic party on the left, and the PQ, as a party founded on separatist principles, have had historic and ideological connections with individuals and groups who are likely to be targeted by the security services for wiretapping—a reasonable enough basis for their suspicions of wiretapping. Explaining the responses of the other groups, however, is not so easy. Each of them is significantly more likely than the general public to support wiretapping by the security service. Why this should be so is not clear. What is clear, though, is that the issue of wiretapping in Canada today is not simply another tolerance issue on which the greater political knowledge and sophistication of the elites predict greater tolerance.

There are further differences among elites. Police are most supportive of wiretapping and thus differ most from the general population. At the other end of the spectrum, lawyers are least supportive of wiretapping, though even so they are more likely to favor it than the general population. Parliamentarians fall somewhere between police and lawyers. So even though the relative positions of elite groups more or less make sense, the reason that decision makers are more in favor of wiretapping than citizens remains something of a mystery.

A METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEM: WHO AS WELL AS WHAT

Policy preferences may hinge on judgments not only on what is to be done—the act of wiretapping—but to whom it is to be done. Thus decision makers might be more supportive of wiretapping than the general population because they have in mind more serious threats to national security than do citizens. Ordinarily, to "control" for this one might use a battery of questions, each outlining a particular kind of group—spies, terrorists, or whatever—and ask whether they should be wiretapped (see Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978). To follow this traditional strategy risks biasing the results. Responses to a list of questions can be detrimentally influenced by question order, as Schuman and Presser (1981) have demonstrated in their studies of question form and sequence. Consider an example: if the first question of such a battery were to ask about a group that respondents think on balance poses a relatively high threat to Canadian security, say terrorists, the first question and response might well "anchor" subsequent answers at a higher level than if a question about a less-threatening group had been asked first. The general point is that whatever the order of questions, using a battery of questions is likely to produce a context effect on subsequent responses.

To overcome the limitation of the conventional approach, a technique employing systematic variations in question wording was used. Four versions of the same basic question were created. Each version asked about tapping the phones of persons who pose a different type of security threat. The specific threats employed were identified using as a guide the definition of "threats to the security of Canada" as set out in the CSIS Act. Four threats are mentioned in the act: subversives, foreign agents, spies, and terrorists (see Appendix 2). Thus four versions of the question were created and administered, each to roughly one quarter of the respondents selected on a random basis in both the citizen and decision-maker samples:

> Everyone was told: "Some people feel that Canada's security service should be able to wire tap the telephones of people . . .
> Random group 1 heard: . . . who hold ideas that may lead to the overthrow of our democratic system."
> Random group 2 heard: . . . who are agents of a foreign government."
> Random group 3 heard: . . . who are suspected of being spies."
> Random group 4 heard: . . . who are suspected of being terrorists."
> Everyone was asked: "Do you think that the security service should be able to wire tap them or not?"

Each respondent was asked only one version of the question. Consequently, no one was under any pressure to balance responses, and the problem of biased results due to an "anchor" effect is avoided.

VARIATIONS BY TYPE OF THREAT

Employing this random variation technique within each of our two samples enables us to make four separate pairwise comparisons of mass and elite attitudes. And as Table 5 shows, the greater elite support for wiretapping is not a matter of "who" as opposed to "what." Elites are more in favor of wiretapping everybody. It makes little difference whether the question is about wiretapping subversives, foreign agents, spies, or terrorists; the decision makers support wiretapping by the security service more than the citizens do. And the difference is remarkably consistent, approximately 16 percentage points.

To focus on the relative difference between the responses of the two samples is not the whole story here. Switching attention for a moment to where the majority stands in each case, one notes a fascinating difference between the citizens and the decision makers. Not only are

Table 5. Should the Security Service Be Able to Wiretap? Citizen Attitudes vs. Decision-Maker Attitudes by Type of Threat

	Subversives		Foreign Agents		Spies		Terrorists	
	Citizens (519)	D.M. (336)	Citizens (550)	D.M. (324)	Citizens (476)	D.M. (340)	Citizens (538)	D.M. (348)
Yes	34.4%	51.2%	45.0%	62.7%	57.2%	70.3%	66.0%	81.0%
No	63.7	47.3	51.4	35.8	41.7	28.5	32.4	18.4
DK/ref	1.9	1.5	3.6	1.5	1.1	1.2	1.5	0.6

the citizens less in favor of wiretapping than the decision makers generally, in at least one instance a substantial majority is *opposed* to wiretapping, whereas the decision makers favor wiretapping in every condition. The two groups end up on different sides of the issue in the case of subversives—"those who hold ideas that may lead to the overthrow of our democratic system." Here over 60% of the citizen sample are opposed to wiretapping while a majority of the decision makers are in favor.

It is important to keep in mind the thrust of this question and the nature of the research design in evaluating this result. The target described here has done nothing other than to "hold ideas that may lead to the overthrow of our democratic system." There is no mention here of anything more than what a person believes, the ideas he or she holds. And there is no contamination of the responses here by reference to any other threats. Each respondent heard only one version of the question, mentioning only one kind of threat. Nevertheless, a majority of the decision makers still favor wiretapping. And clearly, the phrasing of the question is not loaded in favor of a "yes" response, for a substantial majority of the citizens say "no" when asked the very same question.[6]

The remarkable opposition of the citizenry to wiretapping subversives, it should be pointed out, is not centered in only certain segments of the Canadian public. A more fine-grained analysis shows that within all major subgroupings a majority of Canadians say they oppose wiretapping of "those who hold ideas that may lead to the overthrow of our democratic system." Irrespective of party or language preference, one's sex, age, region, or education, the findings are consistent—opposition among citizens to the wiretapping of subversives cuts across all major political and demographic variables. Although opposition to wiretapping subversives is strongest among citizens who identify with the NDP, the majority of those identifying with each of the other major parties is also opposed. And while opposition is strongest among citizens from the Prairies and Québec, from one coast to the other the overall story remains the same: in each region a majority is opposed. Parallel analyses of subgroups among the decision makers tell a different story: in nearly every instance the majority favors wiretapping of subversives. The only major exception is found among the elected members of the NDP.

Interestingly, respondents from both samples view subversion as least serious among the threats set out in the CSIS Act. In fact, further examination of the details of Table 5 makes it clear that both groups—the citizens no less than the elites—carefully differentiate among the four types of threat. For example, when asked about "agents of a foreign government," both groups are more favorably disposed toward wiretapping than they are in the case of subversives. Once again a majority of the decision makers favor wiretapping, only now the majority is significantly larger. Among citizens there is also significantly more support for wiretapping foreign agents than there is for wiretapping subversives, but still the opposition is considerable. Consequently, one finds no clear majority position among the citizens in this instance.

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[6] If the preamble to this question has any effect it is likely to slightly exaggerate the number of "yes" responses obtained, making this item a conservative estimator of opposition to the wiretap powers of the CSIS, which seems appropriate because the law permits wiretapping by the security service in each of the four cases depicted.

The same pattern—careful differentiation among threats by both citizen and elite samples paired with consistent mass–elite differences in support for wiretapping—carries through the questions referring to suspected spies and terrorists. When asked about the security service's listening in on the phone conversations of spies, a majority of citizens are now in favor, but still a sizable minority (41%) are opposed. Even in the case of terrorism, where an even more subsantial majority of Canadians favor wiretapping, the opposition among the citizen sample is far from inconsequential. Nearly one in three members of the general public oppose tapping the phones of suspected terrorists! Clearly then, ordinary Canadians are more skeptical about wiretapping than are their decision makers. The decision makers are no less likely to differentiate between suspected spies and terrorists than are the citizens, but whatever the source of threat mentioned in the question, the decision makers are more likely to favor wiretapping than are the citizens.

TOWARD AN EXPLANATION—ELITE SOPHISTICATION

The published findings on mass–elite differences in attitudes toward wiretapping add little to our understanding of the results reported here. Stouffer (1955) reports surprisingly small mass–elite differences without additional comment. Nunn, Crockett, and Williams (1978) do not report the relevant elite–mass comparisons in their work.[7] And, McClosky and Brill (1983), while finding the public to be slightly less in favor of wiretapping known criminals, do not offer an explanation for the observed difference.

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[7] Their data based upon a battery of questions asking respondents about tapping the phones of communists, demonstrators, drug pushers, and organized criminals do permit the relevant comparisons, however. Such comparisons reveal that the community-leader sample is less supportive of wiretapping than the national cross-section. On average the difference on positive responses is roughly 9% (personal communication with J. Allen Williams, 4 December 1987).

Very recently, in an unpublished conference paper, John Sullivan and David Barnum (1987) have found a sample of members of Parliament in the United Kingdom to be more willing than the general public to agree that members of the group they like the least "should have their phones tapped by the government." Sullivan and Barnum remark that this finding is unexpected, and they admit that the only explanation they can offer for it is largely speculative. They theorize that the question of wiretapping "has a different meaning for the MPs than it does for members of the public." The public, they suggest, are likely to focus on the "costs of according government the power to regulate and control . . . unpopular groups." The MPs, in contrast, probably focus more upon the dangers posed by the groups being monitored, and they "have a deep trust that those conducting the phone taps will not abuse this power."

The findings reported here on Canadian attitudes likewise suggest opposing perspectives among those who govern and those who are governed. Across the full range of threats to national security outlined in the CSIS Act, the responses of ordinary Canadians reveal caution or skepticism regarding government surveillance of private telephone conversations, whereas the responses of the decision makers indicate greater acceptance of such intrusions as an instrument of government control in service of national security. To say as much does not take us very far toward understanding the mechanisms which cue these different perspectives among citizens and elites. Reflecting upon the source of these differing perspectives, however, brings into focus a subtle irony overlooked by those who view elites as "carriers of the creed" or "guardians of democracy." The political sophistication that accompanies elite status can cut two ways. It brings with it greater knowledge of democratic norms and support for individual rights and freedoms to be sure (see McClosky and Brill, 1983), but it also brings with it greater knowledge of existing arrangements and the safeguards built into them.

Some indication of the consequences of such sophistication among the decision makers can be seen by looking more closely at the answers given to the question about wiretapping. The spontaneous need to qualify one's responses is an indication of greater sophistication and cognitive complexity. The data were recorded making note of when qualifications were volunteered by a respondent in answering the question. Careful attention to the details of Table 6 makes it clear that the elites, when compared with the citizens, have a harder time saying "no" to wiretapping and are more likely to offer their qualified support.

In the general population sample very few respondents refuse to offer an opinion or suggest any qualification in answering any of the four versions of the question. For the decision makers there are like-

Table 6. Should the Security Service Be Able to Wiretap? Citizen Attitudes vs. Decision-Maker Attitudes by Type of Threat

	Subversives		Foreign Agents		Spies		Terrorists	
	Citizens (519)	D.M. (336)	Citizens (550)	D.M. (324)	Citizens (476)	D.M. (340)	Citizens (538)	D.M. (348)
Yes	28.1%	31.8%	40.6%	49.1%	51.1%	47.4%	59.1%	53.7%
Qual. yes	6.3	19.3	4.4	13.6	6.1	22.9	7.0	27.3
No	62.5	44.0	40.8	33.3	41.2	24.4	32.0	15.8
Qual. no	1.3	3.3	0.6	2.5	0.5	4.1	0.5	2.6
DK/ref	1.9	1.5	3.6	1.5	1.1	1.2	1.5	0.6

wise very few who refuse to state an opinion, but a substantial number qualify their responses, especially when the reply is affirmative. The qualification was usually to say that the security service should have or the law required it to have a judicial warrant to tap telephones. Depending upon the particular version of the question, between one-seventh and one-quarter of the decision makers offer a qualified yes. This far exceeds the number of qualified responses among the general public, which never is greater than one in fourteen.

In light of what is known about elite and mass publics, it is not surprising to find a greater degree of qualification and attention to the details of due process among the decision makers than among the citizenry. The sophistication of ordinary citizens has often been questioned in the literature of political science. At least since the work of Converse (1970), political scientists have argued that citizens often evaluate social and political issues in a rough and ready fashion. In this light, the finding that citizens are more likely than decision makers to offer a categorical "yes" or "no" is not unexpected.

Not does it seem surprising that the decision makers are more likely to qualify their responses. It is a mark of their political sophistication and their knowledge of the issue and its subtleties. It is important to note that they are nowhere near so likely to qualify their negative responses as they are to qualify their positive ones. As it turns out, something over 20% of the decision makers, on average, offer a "qualified yes," whereas just about 3% offer a "qualified no." It is by this same margin that elites are more willing than citizens to favor wiretapping. In short, the same sophistication that leads decision makers to qualify their responses in the first place also leads them to do so in a way which supports wiretapping.

Discussion

We have here more than just an interesting exception to the theory of democratic elitism. To be sure, the decision makers are more likely to support wiretapping than are the general public, but this does not mean that they are less tolerant of radical ideas than the citizenry. In fact, evidence to the contrary is reported at the outset of this investigation. What we have here is evidence of an irony, a fundamental irony of democratic politics.

Elite groups are more likely to know about and to support individual rights and freedoms to be sure. On most questions the decision makers surveyed in this study are not very different from elite samples elsewhere. In this sense they also appear to be the "carriers of the creed" of social science legend. Every virtue has its vice, however. When asked about wiretapping telephones, these same elites have a much harder time saying "no" than the public—even when the threat is nothing more serious than holding radical ideas. This is in marked contrast to what we would expect from the theory of democratic elitism.

The explanation for this apparent exception takes shape when one recognizes that the political sophistication of elites finds expression not only in greater knowledge and support of democratic norms and values but also in greater knowledge and support of the laws and institutions which enshrine those values. The law permits CSIS to engage in wiretapping when supported by judicial warrant. So when faced with a question about wiretapping, the politically sophisticated respond as much in terms of their knowledge and confidence in law and established institutions and practices as they do in terms of an issue of individual rights and freedoms versus national security. Thus when they qualify their responses they do so mostly in the direction sanctioned by the law, often with specific reference to and implicit confidence in the safeguards and limitations built into the official procedures. And it is the greater incidence of this kind of sophisticated response that differentiates the elite from the citizenry on the issue of wiretapping and accounts for the double-edged character of elite opinion described here.

Thus we have evidence that the political sophistication of elite groups can cut two ways. It can and usually does lead to higher levels of support for individual rights and freedoms, but it can also lead to support for laws and institutions which undermine those same rights and freedoms. The upshot of this is to place civil liberties at greater risk than the theory of democratic elitism would suggest.

Consider for a moment the place of radical ideas in Canadian society, ideas that really challenge the established order of things—"ideas that may lead to the overthrow of our democratic system." The right to hold such ideas is most likely to find support among elite groups. Yet those same elites are more likely than the citizens to end up supporting wiretapping the phones of those who have done nothing more than hold radical ideas. Fortunately, the general public, while not so familiar with democratic norms of individual rights and freedoms, are more skeptical of the safeguards built into the laws and official procedures concerning wiretapping. Ironically it is they who on the issue of wiretapping assume the mantle of the guardians of democracy.[8]

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[8] For an indication of other issue areas where this may also be the case, see the discussion in McClosky and Brill, 1983: chap. 9.

Conclusions

What are we to conclude from this investigation? First and foremost the findings reported here suggest an important qualification to the theory of democratic elitism—a theory which holds that the staunchest defenders of civil liberties are likely to be among those with their hands on the levers of power. On the issue of wiretapping it is the ordinary Canadian who is more concerned about intrusions by government on the right of privacy.

Even more fundamentally, these findings point to the conclusion that the political knowledge and sophistication of elites can cut both ways when it comes to issues of civil liberties. On the one hand, these qualities predispose decision makers to support individual rights and freedoms, but these same qualities can also lead to support for laws and institutions which undermine individual rights and freedoms.

At a more mundane but no less important level, it was found that a majority of Canadians oppose tapping telephones of "those who hold ideas that may lead to the overthrow of our democratic system." And this opposition comes from across major political, social, and demographic groupings. These findings show the public to be critical of countersubversion activities by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and to concur that the "threats to security section of the [CSIS] Act is too broad, particularly insofar as it sustains the somewhat controversial counter subversion program of CSIS" (SIRC, 1986:44).

Appendix 1: Question Wording

FREE SPEECH FOR RADICALS AND EXTREMISTS

Now, I am going to ask you whether you basically agree or basically disagree with a number of statements. The first one is: Free speech is just not worth it if it means we have to put up with the danger to society of radical and extremist views. Do you basically agree or basically disagree with that statement?

EXTREME GROUPS ALLOWED TO HOLD RALLIES

Do you think members of extreme political groups should be allowed to hold rallies in our cities, or should not be allowed to do so?

LEAST-LIKED GROUP ALLOWED TO HOLD RALLIES

I am going to read you a list of groups and then ask you which of the groups you like the least. The list is: socialists, fascists, communists, racists, atheists, abortionists, and anti-abortionists. Which of these groups do you like the least?

Now I am going to read you a statement about the [fill in group]. I would like you to tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, are uncertain, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement. The statement is: The [fill in group] should be allowed to hold public rallies in our cities. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?

ACCUSED HAS RIGHT TO SILENCE

When someone is charged with a criminal offsense in Canada, is that person required to testify in court or does that person have a right to remain silent?

EXCLUDE ILLEGALLY OBTAINED EVIDENCE

Consider this case: The police asked an obviously drunk driver to take a breathalyzer test without telling him that he had a right to consult a lawyer. Should a judge allow the breathalyzer evidence to be used in court or should he exclude it, even if the driver may go free as a result?

Appendix 2: Section 2 of the CSIS Act

2. In this Act, . . .

"threats to the security of Canada" means

(a) espionage or sabotage that is against Canada or is detrimental to the interests of Canada or is detrimental to the interests of Canada or activities directed toward or in support of such espionage or sabotage,

(b) foreign influenced activities within or relating to Canada that are detrimental to the interests of Canada and are clandestine or deceptive or involve a threat to any person,

(c) activities within or relating to Canada directed toward or in support of the threat or use of acts of serious violence against persons or property for the purpose of achieving a political objective within Canada or a foreign state, and

(d) activities directed toward undermining by covert unlawful acts, or directed toward or intended ultimately to overthrow by violence of, the constitutionally established system of government in Canada,

but does not include lawful advocacy, protest or dissent, unless carried on in conjunction with any of the activities referred to in paragraphs (a) to (d).

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SOME LIKE IT HOT

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN RESPONSES TO GROUP FEELING THERMOMETERS

CLYDE WILCOX
LEE SIGELMAN AND
ELIZABETH COOK

Abstract In this paper we explore the nature and causes of individual differences in the use of feeling thermometer items to evaluate social groups. Some respondents have a general tendency to assign higher overall temperature readings and some tend to use a wider range of the temperature scale. These tendencies are partially understandable in terms of the respondent's evaluations of social groups, but other important predictors are identified. Methods of adjusting feeling thermometer scores to account for individual differences are explored, using data from the 1984 American National Election Study. The conclusion is that some sort of adjustment is probably useful for those studying supporters of conservative groups, though such a procedure may not be needed for those who focus on liberal groups.

Since their introduction in the 1964 American National Election Study (ANES), "feeling thermometers" have become standard tools in survey-based political research. Respondents use feeling thermometers to locate attitude objects on an imaginary scale ranging from 0 (very cold) to 100 (very warm). There is mounting evidence that people respond to political objects in consistently positive or consistently negative ways (e.g., Lau, 1982), and it seems possible, for reasons we will elaborate presently, that feeling thermometers exacerbate this tendency.

In this paper we first explore sources of variation in individual use of feeling thermometers to rate political objects. The subjects of our data analysis are respondents in the 1972 ANES. Obviously, more recent

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datasets are available, but the 1972 ANES contains a uniquely broad set of items tapping orientations toward groups and personality dimensions—items central to our analysis.

In the second major section of the paper, we go on to examine the utility of adjusting feeling thermometer scores to identify the supporters of political groups. In this portion of the analysis, we rely on the 1984 ANES.

Individual Differences in the Use of Feeling Thermometers

Respondents in the 1972 ANES used thermometer scales to indicate how they felt about themselves, 14 potential presidential candidates, and 29 groups in American society. Our attention is restricted to the group placements. We calculated a mean and a standard deviation for each respondent across the 29 groups to measure the central tendency and spread of ratings.[1] The grand mean of the thermometer scores was 58°, somewhat toward the warm end of the scale. More importantly for our purposes, the individual mean scores across the groups ranged widely around 58°, from a low of only 18° to a high of 92°, with a standard deviation of 9°. The tendency to assign different scores to different groups also varied markedly among respondents. The standard deviation of the feeling themometer scores assigned to the 29 groups averaged 26° per respondent, but varied widely: the standard deviation of the respondent's standard deviation scores was 7°.[2]

To explore the sources of the variation in the use of feeling thermometers, we estimated a pair of regression models with a total of 19 predictors—16 in the model of mean thermometer ratings and 15 in the model of the standard deviation of thermometer ratings, with 12 common to the two models. Four sets of independent variables were included:

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[1] The groups were big business, poor people, liberals, southerners, intellectuals, Catholics, radical students, policemen, Protestants, Jews, the military, whites, Democrats, blacks, Republicans, labor unions, young people, conservatives, the women's liberation movement, marijuana users, black militants, urban rioters, civil rights leaders, people who live in suburbs, working men, farmers, ministers who lead protests, middle-class people, and people who live in cities.

[2] For comparison, in 1984 the mean of the mean thermometer scores for ANES respondents was 57°, almost identical to the 1972 figure. The 1984 average was computed from the set of groups included in that survey: although there was much overlap between the groups included in the two instruments, there were several groups included in only 1972 or 1984. The 1984 scores were less dispersed than their 1972 counterparts, with an average standard deviation of 21 (compared to 26 in 1972). This difference doubtless reflects the intense social and political polarization in the late 1960s and early 1970s, compared with the relative placidity of the 1980s. When this analysis was repeated for only those groups included in both the 1972 and the 1984 surveys, the results were unchanged.

1. Measures of social location, since those advantaged by the social system (e.g., whites, those with high incomes) might feel more positively toward societal groups.

2. Other measures of feelings toward groups, including measures of group membership, group influence, group identification, and social group disagreement. These measures of group attachment and involvement included strength of partisanship and ideology, since extreme attitudes may lead to more extreme thermometer scores.

3. Measures of psychopolitical factors. We included measures of personality, since some individuals may be "political pollyannas" (Sniderman et al., 1982), while those dissatisfied with their lives may choose uniformly lower ratings. Measures of political interest were included, since those with more interest and information may be better able to differentiate among groups.

4. Measures of average climatic conditions and yearly temperature variation. We reasoned that some respondents might be affected by the nature of the thermometer metaphor: those respondents in chilly climates might think of 60° as relatively warm, while those in some balmy climes might view that temperature as fairly chilly. Moreover, those who live in areas with wide variations in yearly temperatures might assign a wider variation in scores than those who live in more constant climes.[3]

THE MEAN THERMOMETER SCORE

In Table 1 we see that 16 predictors drawn from the four explanations of differences in mean thermometer ratings collectively accounted for 20% of the variance in mean thermometer ratings. However, some of the observed effects ran counter to expectation. Three demographic variables were significantly related to average thermometer scores. Controlling for all the other predictors in the model, women proved to be about 2° more warmly disposed to the 29 groups than were men. The effect of education was unexpectedly inverse. Between whites and nonwhites, there was, ceteris paribus, a temperature difference of almost 5°, but it was unexpectedly nonwhites whose mean thermometer ratings were significantly higher. This finding is not unprecedented, for others (e.g., Lipset and Schneider, 1983) have reported that confidence in many institutions runs higher among minority group members.

Not all the measures of group attachment and involvement proved to be significantly related to mean thermometer scores, but several did. Neither the number of groups to which a respondent belonged nor the strength of his or her party identification helps explain differences in

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[3] For details of items and scale construction, contact Clyde Wilcox.

Table 1. Regression Summary: Mean Thermometer Scores

		Mean Score[a]		Standard Deviation[b]	
Predictor	Mean	*b*	*t*	*b*	*t*
Demographic factors					
Education	12.4	−.25	−2.1*	−.69	−7.4***
Income	11.0	−.13	−1.5	−.02	−.3
Race	.9	−5.51	−4.7***	1.56	1.7
Gender	.46	−1.95	−3.0**	.18	.4
Group attachment and involvement					
Group member	.10	−.18	−.2	—	—
Church attendance	3.0	.62	2.9**	—	—
Strength of partisanship	2.7	−.03	−.1	.83	3.0**
Strength of ideology	2.0	—	—	.32	1.1
(Liberal) ideology	3.8	.93	3.6***	—	—
Group influence scale	5.4	−.63	−4.9***	.66	6.5***
# group identifications	4.9	.56	5.5***	.23	2.8**
Social group disagreement	4.4	—	—	.89	2.2*
Psychopolitical factors					
Cynicism	3.0	−.40	−1.4	.36	1.6
Political interest	3.4	.45	2.0*	.33	1.8
Sense of personal control	3.5	−.13	−.4	.40	1.7
Satisfaction with life	3.6	−.01	−.0	.01	.1
Personal trust	3.7	1.36	3.1**	.68	1.9
Mean temperature	54.8	.03	.7	—	—
Temperature range	64.9	—	—	−.03	−1.1
Constant		57.30	13.1***	17.02	4.8***

NOTES: All tests are two-tailed. Dashes indicate that the variable was not included in the equation.

[a] Mean equation: $R = .45$, $R^2 = .20$, $N = 679$.

[b] Standard deviation equation: $R = .45$, $R^2 = .20$, $N = 685$.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

mean thermometer scores. Ideology does, with every one-point increment on the seven-point liberal–conservative scale being matched by a one-degree increase in the mean thermometer rating. In light of the composition of the 29 groups, which included many that would be more attractive to liberals than conservatives, the liberal tilt of the "warmer" respondents should occasion no great surprise. Church attendance is positively related to average thermometer scores.[4]

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[4] Although religiosity has been found to be related to general conservatism, we have controlled for ideology in this equation. Religious elites might argue that religion makes individuals happier. Cynics might argue instead that religion makes individuals more accepting of societal institutions.

The remaining significant relationships are straightforward. The more groups the respondent personally identified with, and the fewer groups he or she described as having undue political influence, the warmer the respondent's mean temperature on the 29 thermometer scales. The latter two relationships constitute the strongest links in the model. It would be surprising if these particular relationships were not strong, since that would mean, in effect, that two measures of affect for a wide array of political groups were not closely connected to a third such measure.

As for the view that whether mean thermometer ratings are hot or cold depends on whether one's personality is sunny or dark, Table 1 provides only modest support. The psychopolitical characteristics of cynicism, sense of personal control, and satisfaction with life all proved to be unrelated to mean feeling thermometer scores. The significant coefficient for political interest signifies that for every one-point difference on the five-point interest scale, the mean temperature reading moved by less than half a degree—not an effect of the first order. Nor, for that matter, was the impact of personal trust truly major; controlling for all the other predictors in the model, mean feeling thermometer scores varied by less than one and a half degrees for every one-point increment on the five-point personal trust scale.

Climate displayed no perceptible impact on mean feeling thermometer ratings, lending no support to speculations that feeling thermometers say more about where a person lives than they do about his or her affect for various groups.

THE STANDARD DEVIATION

The regression results for the individual-level standard deviations across the 29 groups are also given in Table 1. There we see, as we did for mean thermometer ratings, that the fitted model explains a fifth of the variance. Again, the most surprising of the coefficients is for education. Our expectation had been that more highly educated people would assign more variable ratings, reflecting a greater ability to distinguish among groups. In point of fact, it was the less educated who assigned more variable ratings. We have no ready explanation for this finding, but it is not an anomaly of 1972: in a regression analysis of the 1984 ANES data that paralleled, as nearly as possible, the 1972 analysis, we observed the same significant inverse effect.

Other than education, the dominant predictors of dispersion in feeling thermometer ratings related to respondents' attitudes toward groups. Those who perceived many groups as wielding undue influence in society assigned a significantly wider range of temperatures to groups, as did those who identified with a larger number of groups and those who perceived more conflict among groups. Thus, paralleling the findings for the mean thermometer ratings, the extent of dispersion in affect for groups varied as a function of the variability in respondents' attachments to and perceptions of groups. By the same token, extreme partisans, as expected, assigned more variable ratings to the groups, although extreme ideologues did not. Ideology did exhibit a significant bivariate relationship, but its impact was substantially reduced by the control for strength of partisanship. The performance of the psychopolitical factors was more disappointing. Satisfaction with life had no effect whatsoever. The remaining four psychopolitical factors had marginal impacts.

Finally, climate again displayed no effect on feeling thermometer ratings: the feeling thermometer scores of respondents who resided in areas with extreme temperature swings were no more variable than the scores of residents of more moderate climates.

Implications

Some respondents are simply "warmer" than others to the broad range of groups they rate with feeling thermometers. Moreover, while some respondents restrict their ratings to a relatively narrow band of the thermometer scale, others employ virtually the whole scale.

The foremost predictors of mean feeling thermometer ratings are measures of attachment to and involvement in political groups, a reassuring finding. At the same time, most of the variance in the central tendency and the dispersion of the feeling thermometer ratings remains unexplained. The unexplained variance may include random noise, idiosyncratic factors difficult to measure in survey research, and a previously undocumented type of response set that parallels some respondents' habitual tendency to answer "yes" regardless of question content. This latter explanation is consistent with the findings that high thermometer scores are most often found among the less educated.

Most importantly, we have failed to isolate any truly crippling response patterns for most research questions. The primary effects we have observed are substantively interpretable and tend to validate rather than invalidate the use of thermometer scales.

On the other hand, if one uses a feeling thermometer to measure affect toward any particular group, one will have to bear in mind that some respondents respond to feeling thermometers in an unusual manner. This may pose a particular problem when feeling thermometers are used to identify supporters of particular social groups.

Measuring Group Support: The Feeling Thermometer

Several scholars have operationalized support for political groups or movements by distinguishing between respondents who rate the group warmer than a given cutoff on the feeling thermometer and those who do not. Among the cutoffs that have been tried are 51° or more (Miller, Hildreth, and Simmons, 1986), 60° or more (McEvoy, 1971), 80° or more (Buell and Sigelman, 1985), and any score greater than the population median (Miller, Hildreth, and Simmons, 1986).

Unfortunately, this approach does not take into account individual variation in response patterns. Accordingly, when one establishes a cutoff to identify supporters of a certain group, one runs the risk of producing a set of "false positives" and "false negatives."

False positives are respondents who rate a group warmly, but rate most other groups at least as warmly. In 1984, approximately 10% of the respondents rated at least 11 of the 19 groups in the survey at or above 80°. A few rated nearly every group in the survey at 100°. While these respondents may indeed have felt some generalized warmth toward the group in question, they were more likely to be responding to the feeling thermometer items with a positivity bias. For example, in 1984, 52 respondents gave both the women's liberation movement and the Moral Majority a score of at least 80°, and 69 rated both liberals and conservatives at 80° or warmer. False negatives, on the other hand, rate a group warm relative to their ratings of other groups, but not warmly enough to meet the researcher's cutoff. In 1984, 16% of all respondents did not assign *any* group a score above 70°. For such respondents, a score of 60° would indicate relatively strong support.

Of course, different cutoff points will produce a different mix of false negatives and false positives. If a group is fairly popular, misclassified respondents may have relatively little bearing on the results of the analysis. If the group attracts only limited support, however, the inclusion of false positives and the exclusion of the false negatives may alter the substantive interpretation of the characteristics of the group's supporters.

Some researchers have tried to deal with individual variation in responses to feeling thermometer items by adjusting these items. Several adjustment procedures have been suggested, including subtracting the mean score for all group feeling thermometers from the score for the group in question (Knight, 1984), using both the mean and the standard deviation (Giles and Evans, 1986), and subtracting the mean and dividing by the mean (Cook, 1987). We have found that each of these procedures works about equally well. Supporters of a social or political group are then operationalized as those who rate the group, say, 10° warmer than their individual means for all groups.

To examine the impact of a relative feeling thermometer on the identification of group supporters, we use the 1984 ANES data to explore popular support for four groups—the Moral Majority, the women's liberation movement, conservatives, and liberals. These four groups are ideologically distinct and take stands on a wide array of issues. Although the Moral Majority is known primarily for its positions on social issues, its leaders have also staked positions on economic and foreign policy issues with which the members generally agree (Buell and Sigelman, 1985). Similarly, feminists are liberal on most issues, not just those dealing with women's rights (Cook, 1987). Because blacks assign higher thermometer scores than whites and also differ in their political orientations, this analysis is limited to whites.

FINDINGS

Table 2 contrasts the absolute and relative approaches in identifying supporters of these four groups. In the table, each item is recoded so that high scores indicate more conservative positions. Supporters by the absolute approach are those who rate the group at 80° or above, while supporters by the relative approach evaluate the group at least 10° warmer than their mean for all groups.[5] These two criteria yield four types of respondents: those who meet neither criterion and are therefore nonsupporters, those who meet only the relative criterion, those who meet only the absolute criterion, and those who meet both criteria. Table 2 presents the mean scores for each type on a series of social and political variables.

With respect to support for the Moral Majority and conservatives, the data in Table 2 indicate that respondents who are absolute but not relative supporters are more liberal than the rest. On 23 of 26 items for the two groups, the relative approach identifies more conservative respondents than does the absolute approach. Clearly, then, those who use feeling thermometer items to identify supporters of conservative groups need to take into account response-set tendencies.

For conservative groups, the use of a relative measure of support also results in sharper differences between supporters and nonsupporters on most issues. In some cases, adjustment changes the substantive interpretation of the data. Although these changes occur for all four groups, they are most important for supporters of the Moral Majority. Using the absolute approach, there is no significant relationship between support for the Moral Majority and attitudes toward spending on social programs, government job guarantees, minority aid, government

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[5] The choice of 80° was arbitrary, but it does not substantially affect the results. Separate analyses were conducted using 60°, 70°, and 80° as cutoffs. The general conclusions were quite similar, although the mix of relative and absolute supporters varied.

Table 2. Group Support—All Feeling Thermometers

	Moral Majority				Conservatives			
	Not	Rel	Both	Abs	Not	Rel	Both	Abs
Liberal/conservative ID	4.39	5.67	5.38	4.10*	4.00	5.24	5.84	4.82*
Party ID	2.90	3.96	3.48	2.39**	2.53	3.93	4.20	2.83**
Government programs								
Government services	4.09	4.57	4.37	3.90	3.84	4.78	4.66	3.87**
Guaranteed jobs	4.35	4.72	4.63	3.73**	4.10	5.00	5.04	3.98**
Spending scale: social programs	1.76	1.95	1.84	1.50**	1.68	2.00	1.98	1.62**
Minority aid	4.21	4.66	4.69	3.21**	4.10	4.69	4.56	3.81**
Social issues								
Abortion	1.99	2.50	2.94	2.43	2.06	1.95	2.25	2.33
School prayer	2.20	2.98	3.20	2.95	2.21	2.22	2.71	3.32*
Government action: improve SES of women	3.91	4.34	4.43	3.09**	3.73	4.47	4.35	4.19
Women's role	2.61	3.38	4.05	2.69*	2.66	2.98	2.87	2.80
Foreign and defense								
Defense spending	3.93	4.34	4.84	4.09	3.78	4.36	4.52	4.47
Central America	3.37	3.89	4.00	2.62**	3.20	3.76	4.16	3.44
Détente	4.02	4.62	5.01	3.73*	3.86	4.56	4.73	3.77**
N	1,300	77	107	28	1,001	224	256	48

	Feminists				Liberals			
	Not	Rel	Both	Abs	Not	Rel	Both	Abs
Liberal/conservative ID	4.71	4.35	3.97	4.06	4.85	3.71	3.05	4.10
Party ID	3.23	2.63	2.35	2.07	3.27	2.34	1.94	2.51
Government programs								
Government services	4.28	3.97	3.58	3.38*	4.24	4.00	3.55	3.79
Guaranteed jobs	4.51	4.36	3.79	3.87	4.54	4.34	3.66	3.97
Spending scale: social programs	1.81	1.78	1.59	1.58**	1.80	1.79	1.58	1.63*
Minority aid	4.45	4.23	3.57	3.42**	4.41	4.13	3.61	3.53*
Social issues								
Abortion	2.23	1.69	1.79	2.30**	2.17	1.61	1.79	2.17**
School prayer	2.54	1.90	1.92	2.47	2.46	1.81	1.90	2.65*
Government action: improve SES of women	4.21	3.72	3.13	3.50	4.07	3.98	3.21	3.41*
Women's role	3.04	2.41	1.96	2.57	2.81	2.91	2.31	2.71
Foreign and defense								
Defense spending	4.14	3.71	3.69	3.77	4.15	3.69	3.43	3.89
Central America	3.74	3.11	3.23	3.56	3.65	3.24	3.34	4.14
Détente	4.29	4.06	3.52	3.48	4.25	4.15	3.34	3.97
N	1,106	200	237	42	1,180	140	169	41

NOTES: Mean values for each item for each group. Higher scores indicate more conservative positions. Not = not a supporter by either definition. Rel = relative definition only. These respondents rated the group at least 10° warmer than their personal mean, but less than 80°. Both = both definitions. These respondents rated the group at least 10° warmer than their personal means, and at least 80°. Abs = absolute definition only. These respondents rated the group at least 80° but did not rate the group at least 10° warmer than their individual mean.

* Difference between relative-only and absolute-only supporters significant at .05.

** Difference between relative-only and absolute-only supporters significant at .01.

action to improve the socioeconomic status of women, and involvement in Central America. Using the relative approach, there is a significant relationship on each of these variables in the predicted direction.

Adjustment does not improve the identification of supporters of the women's liberation movement or liberals. On only 5 of 13 items for feminists and 7 of 13 for liberals does the relative-only group appear more liberal than the absolute-only group. In fact, those with high average thermometer scores across all groups are more liberal than those who assign lower scores. One explanation lies in the groups for which feeling thermometer items were used in 1984; there were more feeling thermometer items measuring affect toward groups for which liberals would feel sympathy. Making the adjustment based on a respondent's individual mean toward a balanced set of liberal and conservative groups rather than his or her mean for groups in the survey[6] improved the discrimination for these groups on exactly half of the items. For supporters of the women's liberation movement, this type of adjustment improved the discrimination on all three women's issues in the survey (abortion, women's role, and whether the government should act to improve the socioeconomic status of women).

Conclusion

Survey respondents differ in their responses to feeling thermometer items. Much of this difference is explained by real differences in responses to groups, but some is due to other individual differences. Those seeking to identify group supporters must be aware of the possible effects of false positives and false negatives on their categories of supporters and identifiers. In general, those with positivity biases seem to be moderately liberal, implying that this problem is more significant for researchers who are examining support for conservative groups.

In measuring support for the Moral Majority and conservatives, using relative rather than absolute scores produces sharper discrimination between group supporters and nonsupporters, and a variant of this procedure improves the discrimination on women's issues for supporters of the women's liberation movement. These improvements are especially marked for supporters of the Moral Majority. It is likely that fewer Americans recognize the name of the Moral Majority than recognize terms like conservative and liberal. For those who do not recognize the group, its name may lead to positive affect even among those who would oppose its programmatic stance. This may imply that individual differences are a greater problem not only for conservative groups but also for those which are not well known.

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[6] The balanced set of groups consisted of middle-class people, whites, Catholics, the U.S. Supreme Court, anti-abortionists, gays/lesbians, labor unions, big business, and women. The resultant scale showed no relationship to ideological self-identification.

We have not dealt with feeling thermometers toward candidates, nor have we explored the ingroup–outgroup distinction that has been an important concept in much research on group affect. These and a wide range of other issues are usually approached as questions of substance, but our analysis suggests that they should be considered questions of measurement as well.

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THE POLLS—A Report

WOMEN'S AND MEN'S ATTITUDES ABOUT A WOMAN'S PLACE AND ROLE

RITA J. SIMON AND
JEAN M. LANDIS

The poll data assembled here focus on women's and men's responses to issues that affect women's lives in direct and often immediate ways: their jobs, their incomes, their career aspirations, their children, their status within the family, and their support of the Equal Rights Amendment. On some issues we have been able to show trends from the 1930s to the present, and on every issue we have data for at least two time periods, usually a decade apart. Among the 90 data points comparing the responses of women and men that are reported in the polls section, disagreement ranges between 0% and 18%. For 50% of these points, the disagreement between men and women is 5 percentage points or less. For the other half of the data points, the differences between men and women range from 6 to 18 percentage points.

The first set of polls compares male and female attitudes about married women working outside their homes. From 1938, the mid-depression era, to 1972, the beginning of the contemporary women's movement, support for the participation of married women in the non-domestic labor market drastically increased among both women and men. As the women's movement gained momentum, and the two-income family became an economic necessity for the attainment of middle-class status, approval of married women working outside the home steadily increased from 1972 to 1984. A moderate jump in approval among both men and women in 1985 was followed by a comparable decline in 1986. For all years, differences among men and women were slight, and from 1975 on the differences were not statistically significant.

Related to the issue of married women working outside their homes is the question of women's rate of pay. Beginning in 1942, polls find widespread support for equal pay among men and women, and since 1962 the differences between men's and women's views have almost

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disappeared. Apparently, this pervasive support of equal pay for equal work has rendered pay discrimination against women a nonissue in the national polls, as items addressing it fail to appear subsequent to 1977.

Equal employment opportunity for women is a prerequisite to their receipt of equal pay. Yet, discrimination against women continues to be perceived by a substantial number of the women and men polled. From 1975 to 1987 there is a divergence of opinion between men and women due to increased perceptions of discrimination among women. When asked in general about employment discrimination, the percentage of women perceiving discrimination increased from 46% to 56% between 1975 and 1987. Among men, the trend was weaker and reversed: 50% felt that women were discriminated against in 1975 compared to 46% in 1987.

With regard to a more specific type of employment-related opportunity—the opportunity for becoming the executive of a company—between 1970 and 1987, both men and women have become slightly more optimistic about qualified women's chances. However, in comparing the responses of women as a whole in 1987 to those of working women in 1985, it appears that the former are more likely than the subpopulation of working women to believe that women and men have equal chances of becoming executives. Although in 1985 working women were more optimistic than men about their chances for promotion and advancement in their positions, by 1987 a smaller percentage of both men and working women agreed that women have an equal chance of becoming an executive.

Given the publicity and support that the women's movement has received over the years, polls questioning respondents about the preferred gender of their bosses have produced surprising results. While the percentage of women who favor working for another woman increased by more than 100% between 1953 and 1987, twice as many women still prefer working for a man, albeit the overall percentage of women who specify a preference for a male boss has declined by 20%. For men, the shift has been more dramatic. Since 1953, a 75% preference for a male boss has steadily declined, and by 1987 over half of the male respondents said it made no difference to them whether their boss was a man or woman. This shift in opinion among men is even more remarkable when viewed in relation to that of the women. In 1987, 8% more of the women than men polled indicated a preference for a male boss, and 18% more of the men than women indicated that they had no gender preference. However, 10% more of the women than men voiced a definite preference for a woman boss (Kirp, Yudof, and Franks, 1986).

What sort of marriage do men and women contemplate in the era of "women's liberation"? Do both sexes envision major changes in the traditional division of labor between husbands and wives, or are men more likely to favor maintaining the status quo whereby women assume major responsibilities for housekeeping and child care? Data representing an 11-year period show that although the traditional division of labor between wives and husbands has lost some support, marriage has not gone out of style. In 1985 a higher percentage of both men and women preferred a more egalitarian marriage over the more traditional one. Although there is a slight divergence in the responses of men and women in 1985—with men showing a slight preference for the traditional arrangement—the differences are not great, and for both sexes marriage is almost unanimously preferred over other living arrangements.

When asked in 1970, and again in 1985, to assess whether the "institution of marriage" was stronger, weaker, or about the same as it was ten years ago, the majority of men and women were in agreement that it was in fact weaker. However, the 1985 respondents were somewhat less pessimistic than their 1970 predecessors, which may be attributable to the 1970 respondents' reflections on a decade of social turmoil in which marriage and the family were targets of attack and derision.

An issue about which there has been a dramatic shift in both attitude and behavior is the "ideal" number of children a family should have. This shift may be due not only to changes in women's roles and perceptions of their status in society, but also to beliefs about the danger of "overpopulation" and the success of a social movement espousing zero population growth. Throughout the years, there has been little difference between the responses of men and women with regard to the ideal family size. The 1960s mark the beginning of the smaller-family trend which is reflected in the change in opinions of the men and women polled in the 1940s and 1950s and those polled in the 1970s. From the early 1970s onward, the choices of both men and women shifted from a preference for at least 4 children to 2 children.

In spite of continued support for the institution of marriage and family, a majority of men and women polled from 1970 to 1985 agreed that divorce was an acceptable solution to a marriage that was not working. However, there was less agreement among men and women about the issue of alimony. While the majority of women and men opposed alimony for a woman able to earn a reasonable income, women were more likely than men to favor it and less likely than men to oppose it. More interesting is the slight trend for both men and women to support alimony for the divorced woman (Rothman, 1978).

That men and women have not unilaterally rejected the institution of alimony for a divorced woman able to earn a reasonable income on her own suggests that certain patriarchal assumptions regarding the gender organization of societal institutions linger on. At the height of the feminist movement in 1977, a majority of both men and women agreed that a woman's place was in the home. Although support for this position declined by 1986, slightly less than half of the men and women polled converged in maintaining support for it. As late as the early and mid 1980s, both men and women—and women more than men—believe that it is the husband's position that determines the family's overall status. The majority of both men and women believe that the husband's career supersedes that of the wife; a wife should change jobs and defer career advancement in accordance with the unfolding requirements of the husband's career path. However, from 1977 to 1985 a majority of men and women converged in disagreement with the statement that "it is more important for the wife to help her husband's career than to have one herself." Perhaps the composite message is one that encourages the married woman to have a career of her own, so long as it remains within the boundaries imposed by the career of her husband (Frieze et al., 1978).

Despite this suggestion that women continue to be expected to define their careers, and thus themselves, in terms of their husbands, by the mid 1980s a majority of men and women agreed that respect for the individuality of women has increased. This perceived respect notwithstanding, there is a perception that women have not achieved an optimal status, presumably one equal to that of men. When asked about the desirability of improving the status of women, in a general or abstract sense, there has been a big shift on the part of male and female respondents toward approval of that objective. Although this shift indicates increasing support for improving the status of women, it implies also an awareness of the need for improvement. For the most part, men's and women's responses to these issues have been closely aligned (Wilkins and Miller, 1985). The opinions of both sexes with regard to perceived respect of women's individuality have proceeded at virtually an identical pace. Note that it was not until 1985 that slightly more women than men favored such efforts, and it was not until 1981 that support for the ERA among women equaled the support expressed by men.

The consistent theme is the shared perspectives of men and women. On none of the issues were there big differences in the opinions and preferences of men and women. Responses to items about women in the work force belie the image that women perceive themselves as victims of discrimination and arbitrary treatment. Except for their chances of becoming an executive, the majority of the working women (and men agree with them) believe that they have as good a chance as men to increase their salaries, enhance their responsibilities, and gain promotions.

Men and women also see eye-to-eye on the number of children they would like to have, on the amount of respect they have for the individuality of women, in their support of efforts that have been made to strengthen women's status, and in their approval of the Equal Rights Amendment (Fleming, 1986).

But the large majority of women and men believe that it is the wife who should quit her job and relocate with her husband if the husband is offered a more attractive position in another city. There is no quid pro quo on that issue. If it is the wife who is offered the better job, the majority of both women and men believe that she should turn it down and stay where she is so that her husband can continue working at his job. And while there have been changes in attitudes since 1953, more men and women would still rather work for a man than for a woman (Marshall, 1984).

The large majority of men and women in this country are not involved in a confrontation about women's rights: men are as supportive as women themselves are of many of the issues for which the women's movement has struggled. The women's movement has not radicalized the American woman: she is still prepared to put marriage and children ahead of her career and to allow her husband's status to determine the family's position in society.

The data reproduced in this article were assembled primarily from published sources, including Erskine, 1977; The Virginia Slims American Women's Poll, 1980 and 1985; and the Gallup Public Opinion Index/Gallup Reports, 1968–1987. Special cross-tabulations were supplied by the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago. Where sample sizes are not noted, the sample *N* was at least 1,000. Data are available from the appropriate survey organizations.

Gallup—Gallup Poll
NORC-GSS—National Opinion Research Center, General Social Survey
NBC—National Broadcasting Company News
Roper—Roper Organization
Starch—Daniel Starch and Staff, Inc.

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Equality in the Workplace

Gallup, NORC-GSS: Do you approve or disapprove of a married woman earning money in business or industry if she has a husband capable of supporting her?

	1938[a]		*1972*		*1974*		*1975*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Approve	25%	19%	66%	62%	71%	65%	71%	69%
Disapprove	75	81	31	37	27	34	27	30
No opinion/DK	0	0	3	1	2	1	2	1
N			806	805	790	688	818	667

	1977		*1978*		*1982*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Approve	64%	67%	74%	71%	75%	73%
Disapprove	34	32	25	28	23	26
No opinion/DK	2	1	1	1	2	1
N	836	692	887	643	867	638

	1983		*1985*		*1986*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Approve	75%	75%	84%	85%	76%	78%
Disapprove	23	23	14	12	23	21
No opinion/DK	2	2	2	3	1	1
N	907	686	842	682	848	617

[a] The 1938 data are Gallup; the later points are NORC-GSS.

Gallup: If women take the place of men in industry, should they be paid the same wages as men?

		1942	
	National	*Women*	*Men*
Yes, paid same	78%	85%	71%
No	14	7	20
No opinion	8	8	9

Gallup: Do you approve or disapprove of paying women the same salaries as men if they are doing the same work?

	1954	*1962*	
	National	*Women*	*Men*
Approve	87%	92%	88%
Disapprove	13	8	12

Starch:[a] Women should receive the same pay as men for doing the same work—agree or disagree?

	1973	
	Women	*Men*
Agree	96%	94%
Disagree	4	6

[a] As cited in *Public Opinion*, January/February 1978, 36.

NBC:[a] Another resolution called for equal pay for women for equal work. Do you favor or oppose equal pay for women and men when they are doing the same job?

	1977
	National
Favor	94%
Oppose	6

[a] As cited in *Public Opinion*, January/February 1978, 36.

Gallup: Do you feel that women in this country have equal job opportunities with men or not?

	1975		*1982*		*1987*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Yes	49%	46%	41%	46%	35%	48%
No	46	50	54	50	56	46
No opinion/DK	5	4	5	4	9	6
N	750	750	750	750	515	

Gallup: If a woman has the same ability as a man, does she have as good a chance to become the executive of a company or not?

	1970		*1975*		*1982*		*1987*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Yes	39%	39%	37%	43%	40%	45%	46%	50%
No	54	56	59	54	56	49	50	42
No opinion	7	5	4	3	4	6	4	8
N	750	750	750	750	750	750	515	

Gallup: If you were taking a new job and had your choice of a boss, would you prefer to work for a man or for a woman?

	1953		*1975*		*1982*		*1987*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
A man	57%	75%	60%	63%	52%	40%	37%	29%
A woman	8	2	10	4	15	9	19	9
No difference	29	21	27	32	30	46	39	57
No opinion/DK	6	2	3	1	3	5	5	5
N	750	750	750	750	750	750	515	

Roper: Do you feel you stand an equal chance with the men you work with/ Do you believe women stand an equal chance with men they work with in the following areas?

Salary	*1970*		*1980*		*1985*	
	Working Women	*Men*	*Working Women*	*Men*	*Working Women*	*Men*
Equal chance	54%	45%	55%	54%	57%	48%
Not equal	33	49	32	40	33	46
Do not know	13	6	13	6	10	6
N	870	1,000	1,383	1,004	1,560	1,000
Responsibility						
Equal chance	67%	56%	68%	62%	73%	61%
Not equal	21	39	20	32	18	33
Do not know	12	5	12	6	9	6
N	870	1,000	1,383	1,004	1,560	1,000
Promotion						
Equal chance	51%	43%	52%	49%	53%	45%
Not equal	32	50	33	42	35	49
Do not know	17	7	15	9	12	7
N	870	1,000	1,383	1,004	1,560	1,000
Becoming an executive						
Equal chance	33%	32%	34%	42%	38%	37%
Not equal	46	58	47	48	45	54
Do not know	21	10	20	10	17	9
N	870	1,000	1,383	1,004	1,560	1,000

Roper: Suppose both a husband and wife work at good and interesting jobs and the husband is offered a very good job in another city. Assuming they have no children, which one of these solutions do you think they should seriously consider?

	1980		*1985*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Husband should turn down the job	10%	18%	10%	19%
Wife should quit and relocate with husband	77	68	72	62
Husband should take new job and move/wife should keep her job and stay	4	4	6	5
No opinion/DK	9	10	12	14
N	3,007	1,004	3,000	1,000
If the wife is offered a very good job in another city?				
Wife should turn down the job	68%	62%	55%	58%
Husband should quit and relocate with wife	17	18	20	22
Wife should take new job and move/husband should keep his job and stay	4	5	8	6
No opinion/DK	11	15	17	14
N	3,007	1,004	3,000	1,000

NORC-GSS: It is more important for a wife to help her husband's career than to have one herself.

	1977		*1985*		*1986*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Strongly agree	15%	12%	7%	6%	7%	5%
Agree	44	39	30	30	30	28
Disagree	31	40	41	49	44	50
Strongly disagree	7	7	20	11	18	14
No opinion/DK	3	2	2	4	1	3
N	834	690	842	685	848	621

Marriage and Family

Roper: In today's society there are different lifestyles and some that are acceptable today that weren't in the past. Regardless of what you may have done or plan to do with your life, and thinking of what would give you personally the most satisfying and interesting life, which one of these different ways of life do you think would be the best as a way of life?

	1974		*1980*		*1985*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Marriage where husband and wife share responsibilities. Both work and share housekeeping and child care responsibilities	46%	44%	52%	49%	57%	50%
Traditional marriage; husband assumes responsibility for providing for family and wife runs house and takes care of children	50	48	42	42	37	43
Living with someone of opposite sex, but not married	3	1	2	4	2	3
Remain single and living alone	1	1	2	2	2	3
Remain single and live with others of the same sex	—	—	—	—	—	1
Live in large family of people with similar interests in which some are married and some are not	1	1	1	1	1	1
No opinion/DK	0	5	1	2	1	0
N	3,006	1,002	3,007	1,004	3,000	1,000

Roper: Compared to ten years ago, do you think the institution of marriage is stronger, weaker, or about the same as it was then?

	1970		*1985*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Stronger	5%	5%	15%	16%
Weaker	73	71	60	59
Same	19	22	23	24
No opinion/DK	3	2	2	1
N	3,000	1,000	3,000	1,000

Gallup, Roper: What do you consider the ideal size of a family—a husband and wife and how many children?

	Gallup 1941		*Gallup 1952*		*Roper 1974*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
0	1%	1%	—	—	1%	1%
1	2	1	1%	1%	3	2
2	27	29	25	30	45	48
3	23	26	27	30	22	23
4	28	20	31	24	17	11
5 +	13	15	11	11	7	6
No opinion/DK	6	8	5	4	5	9
N					3,006	1,002

	Roper 1980		*Roper 1985*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
0	1%	1%	1%	1%
1	3	4	3	3
2	51	51	55	53
3	23	24	21	26
4	15	11	12	10
5 +	4	4	3	4
No opinion/DK	3	5	5	3
N	3,007	1,004	3,000	1,000

NORC-GSS: What do you think is an ideal number of children for a family to have?

	1972		*1974*		*1975*		*1976*		*1977*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
0	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
1	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	4	3	1
2	39	44	45	46	50	48	53	50	50	48
3	25	23	23	25	23	25	20	21	22	25
4	19	18	19	13	16	13	11	15	17	12
5 +	6	8	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	5
NO/DK	8	5	6	8	5	7	8	4	4	7
N	775	777	773	671	796	648	814	647	823	677

	1978		*1982*		*1983*		*1985*		*1986*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
0	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
1	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2
2	50	52	54	52	52	53	57	55	52	51
3	26	21	18	21	22	26	22	23	24	27
4	14	12	15	10	14	10	11	11	11	15
5 +	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3
NO/DK	4	8	6	11	6	5	4	4	6	0
N	864	620	842	624	891	665	831	669	830	610

Roper: If marriage isn't working out, do you favor or oppose divorce as a solution?

	1970		*1974*		*1980*		*1985*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Favor	52%	54%	60%	59%	62%	58%	57%	54%
Oppose	20	23	20	24	22	25	23	28
Depends	26	22	16	14	16	16	19	17
No opinion/DK	2	1	4	3	0	1	1	1
N	3,000	1,000	3,006	1,002	3,007	1,004	3,000	1,000

If a divorced woman has or can earn a reasonable income, do you think she should receive alimony or not?

Favor	18%	8%	19%	12%	20%	12%	23%	14%
Oppose	62	76	66	72	59	69	54	66
Depends	19	14	10	11	19	14	21	19
No opinion/DK	1	2	5	5	2	5	2	1
N	3,000	1,000	3,006	1,002	3,007	1,004	3,000	1,000

NORC-GSS: It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.

	1977		*1985*		*1986*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Strongly agree	17%	19%	9%	10%	11%	7%
Agree	45	49	37	39	36	40
Disagree	28	27	35	40	37	42
Strongly disagree	8	4	17	8	15	9
No opinion/DK	2	1	2	3	1	2
N	835	691	843	685	847	621

Equal Rights Amendment

Gallup: Do you favor or oppose this amendment? [Asked of everyone after they were asked: "Have you heard or read about the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution which would give women equal rights and equal responsibilities?]

		1975			*1976*			*1978*	
	National	*Women*	*Men*	*National*	*Women*	*Men*	*National*	*Women*	*Men*
Favor	58%	54%	63%	57%	55%	59%	58%	55%	62%
Oppose	24	25	22	24	26	23	31	33	29
No opinion	18	21	15	19	19	18	11	12	9
N	1,500	750	750	1,500	750	750	1,500	750	750

Do you favor or oppose this amendment? [Asked of those who had heard or read about the ERA]

		1980			*1981*			*1982*	
	National	*Women*	*Men*	*National*	*Women*	*Men*	*National*	*Women*	*Men*
Favor	58%	54%	61%	63%	63%	63%	56%	57%	55%
Oppose	31	34	28	32	32	32	34	33	36
No opinion	11	12	11	5	5	5	10	10	9
N	1,365	690	675	1,321	668	653	1,343	668	675

Gallup: Would you please tell me whether you generally favor or oppose passage of an equal rights amendment to the constitution?

		1984	
	National	*Women*	*Men*
Favor	63%	62%	64%
Oppose	31	32	31
No opinion	6	6	5
N	1,590	806	784

Equality of Status

Roper: On the whole do you feel that, compared with 10 years ago, women are now looked on with more respect as individual human beings, looked on with less respect, or about the same respect as 10 years ago?

	1970		*1974*		*1980*		*1985*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
More	38%	40%	47%	48%	53%	53%	60%	61%
Less	27	25	23	23	22	20	18	15
Same	30	32	23	25	21	24	21	22
No opinion/DK	5	3	7	4	4	3	1	2
N	3,000	1,000	3,006	1,002	3,007	1,004	3,000	1,000

Roper: So you favor or oppose most of the efforts to strengthen and change women's status in society today?

	1970		*1972*		*1974*		*1980*		*1985*	
	Women	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*
Favor	40%	44%	48%	49%	57%	63%	64%	64%	73%	69%
Oppose	42	39	36	36	25	19	24	23	17	17
No opinion/DK	18	17	16	15	18	18	12	13	10	14
N	3,000	1,000	3,000	1,000	3,006	1,002	3,007	1,004	3,000	1,000

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Articles

Education and Political Tolerance: Testing the Effects of Cognitive Sophistication and Target Group Affect 285
LAWRENCE BOBO and FREDERICK C. LICARI

Setting the Polling Agenda for the Issue of AIDS 309
JAMES W. DEARING

Marginality and Liberalism Among Jewish Elites 330
ROBERT LERNER, ALTHEA K. NAGAI, and STANLEY ROTHMAN

The Man in the Teflon Suit? The Environmental Connection, Political Drama, and Popular Support in the Reagan Presidency 353
CHARLES W. OSTROM, JR., and DENNIS M. SIMON

The Effect of Question Wording on Public Support for Government Spending 388
KENNETH A. RASINSKI

In Memoriam

Paul B. Sheatsley, 1917–1989 395
DON CAHALAN

The Polls

Review: Survey Organization Differences in Estimating Public Participation in the Arts 397
JOHN P. ROBINSON

Report: American Attitudes Toward Israeli–Palestinian Relations in the Wake of the Uprising 415
ALVIN RICHMAN

Book Reviews

Carol H. Weiss and Eleanor Singer, *Reporting of Social Science in the National Media* 431
LEO BOGART

Netherlands Central Bureau of Statistics, *Automation in Survey Processing* 433
WILLIAM L. NICHOLLS II

Hubert J. O'Gorman, ed., *Surveying Social Life: Papers in Honor of Herbert H. Hyman* 435
DAVID L. SILLS

Book Notes

Asher Arian, Illan Talmud, and Tamar Hermann, *National Security and Public Opinion in Israel* 439
AMIRAM VINOKUR

W. Phillips Davison, *Mass Media, Civic Organizations, and Street Gossip: How Communication Affects the Quality of Life in an Urban Neighborhood* 440
JOHN M. WALLACE, JR.

AAPOR Proceedings

Conference Report 443

AAPOR Award 445

Presidential Address: Methods and Standards—A Challenge for Change 446
WARREN J. MITOFSKY

Conference Program 454

Annual Membership Meeting 463

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11

EDUCATION AND POLITICAL TOLERANCE

TESTING THE EFFECTS OF COGNITIVE SOPHISTICATION AND TARGET GROUP AFFECT

LAWRENCE BOBO AND
FREDERICK C. LICARI

Abstract This paper examines the effects of education and cognitive sophistication on willingness to extend civil liberties to nonconformist groups. We conducted secondary analysis of the 1984 General Society Survey data. The results show that there is a strong tolerance dimension that cuts across groups and types of actions. We found strong positive effects of education on a multiple target group tolerance scale that included both left-wing and right-wing groups. A substantial fraction of the education effect on tolerance is mediated by cognitive sophistication. The effects of education on tolerance are strong even when a person has negative feelings toward the target group. This paper helps identify why and when (e.g., cognitive sophistication and dislike of a target group) education enhances political tolerance. We discuss the implications of the research for debates on the education–tolerance relationship.

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The effect of education on levels of support for civil liberties is a central concern of students of political tolerance. Stouffer's (1955) pioneering work established widely used measures of tolerance, provided baseline data on the U.S. population, and documented an important dependence of expressed levels of tolerance on education. Later studies also found that education was a key determinant of tolerance (Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978). Yet, recent work on political tolerance (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982) and on intergroup attitudes and beliefs (Jackman, 1978; Jackman and Muha, 1984) has questioned whether education encourages more enlightened and tolerant views. We are interested in better understanding when and why increasing years of education may lead to a greater commitment to democratic norms of tolerance.

Our first objective is to identify more precisely the underlying traits that higher levels of education are frequently assumed to impart. One of the most prominent explanations for the positive relationship between education and tolerance is the greater cognitive sophistication produced by more years of schooling. Few investigations have employed direct measures of cognitive sophistication as predictors of tolerance. We test for such effects in the analysis reported below.

Our second objective is to perform a stringent test of the education–tolerance relationship that takes into account feelings of approval or disapproval of the target group whose rights are in question. Recent research on the appropriate definition and measurement of tolerance suggests that merely eliciting support for a civil liberty may not reflect tolerance, since the group in question may be nonthreatening or even liked. Thus, we also examine the effect of education on tolerance when the group in question is opposed by the respondent.

Excellent data for conducting this research are available. The 1984 General Social Survey included 15 questions on support for civil liberties (three parallel items on each of five nonconformist groups). Importantly, this set of items compensates for weaknesses of some earlier studies of tolerance by including questions on groups from the left and right ends of the political spectrum. A multiple-item measure of cognitive sophistication is also available. In addition, for four of the five nonconformist groups there are indicators of respondents' approval or disapproval of the target nonconformist group.

Below we review the claims that have been made for and against education as a source of greater tolerance, emphasizing the importance of cognitive sophistication. We next place the concern with the effects of education in the context of appropriate definition and measurement of tolerance. These discussions formulate two hypotheses concerning education and tolerance which we then test empirically.

Education and Political Tolerance

THE CASE FOR EDUCATION

Stouffer's work established that tolerance was higher among those living outside the South, those living in urban as opposed to rural areas, those perceiving little threat from the target group, the nonreligious, men as opposed to women, elites more than the mass public, and the highly educated more than those with less education. He expressed optimism that the overall level of tolerance would increase over time, in part because of the increasing years of education younger cohorts were receiving. Nunn, Crockett, and William's (1978) replication study reported slightly stronger effects of education on tolerance in 1973 than Stouffer had found in 1954. Nunn and colleagues stressed that increasing years of education were part of a learning process that enhanced cognitive skills, cultural knowledge, and cognitive flexibility. In a similar vein, McClosky (1964) maintained that democratic values are complex ideas requiring considerable education and social learning before they will be applied. Davis's (1975) analysis of change noted education effects within each of the cohorts used in his analysis and a contribution by increasing levels of education of 4% to the overall change of 22% in tolerance between 1954 and 1971.

Others have argued that education also increases the consistency of application of general democratic principles in concrete or more applied situations. For example, Prothro and Grigg (1960) found that support for abstract democratic norms was very high and unaffected by education. But support for concrete applications of those principles was much lower, with the highly educated exhibiting more consistency than the less well educated. They interpreted these patterns as demonstrating that education provides "greater acquaintance with the logical implications of the broad democratic principles" (Prothro and Grigg, 1960:291). McClosky (1964) argued that education played a large part in the finding that his sample of "political influentials" was more supportive of democratic ideology than the "mass electorate." More recently, Lawrence (1976) found that the highly educated were more likely to apply general norms of tolerance to groups they disliked.

In general, it is widely accepted that education increases levels of information. Hyman, Wright, and Reed (1978) examined the effects of education on measures of knowledge and receptivity to new information using measures contained in 54 national sample surveys conducted between the years 1949 and 1971. They found large and consistent effects of education on knowledge and openness to new information. Furthermore, in an equally copious secondary analysis, Hyman and

Wright (1979) extended their examination of education effects to indicators of values and attitudes. Their major conclusion was that education produced "large, lasting and diverse good effects on values" (Hyman and Wright, 1979:61).

THE CASE AGAINST EDUCATION

Several criticisms of the education–tolerance hypothesis have been advanced. First, Jackman (1973) suggested that methodological problems, such as acquiescent response bias, resulted in artifactual evidence of an education–tolerance relationship. She found that poorly educated respondents were more likely than the highly educated to agree with simple, strongly worded questions that posed only one side of an issue. Questions presenting both sides of an issue and eschewing agree–disagree response formats were less likely to show education effects.

Second, effects of education that vary as questions move from abstract principle to concrete issues have been read as showing that education imparts only a superficial degree of commitment to democratic values. Jackman's (1978) analysis of National Election Study data found that education influenced support for the general principle of racial integration but had no impact on support for specific policies aimed at integration or equal treatment of blacks. And contrary to Prothro and Grigg, Jackman found that because education had no effect at all on the concrete policy questions, the highly educated were no more likely to apply the general principle than those with less education.

Jackman and Muha (1984) investigated the influence of education on the intergroup attitudes of three dominant groups—whites, men, and the nonpoor—toward their respective subordinate groups—blacks, women, and the poor. Education had significant effects on only 3 of 43 items pertaining variously to beliefs, feelings, and general and concrete policy orientations in the race, gender, and class contexts. The items most responsive to education were general policy orientation items that invoked a sense of equal treatment of individuals (i.e., individual rights) rather than equality among groups. Jackman's interpretation of these patterns stressed that education does not increase tolerance so much as it enhances the ability of members of privileged groups to develop sophisticated defenses of their advantaged social status. From this perspective, the greater support for democratic values observed among the highly educated is a superficial advocacy of individual rights that provides a principled basis for rejecting group-based claims on society.

Third, Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus (1979) maintained that the relationship between education and tolerance is largely artifactual. According to this critique, Stouffer (1955) and later analysts relying upon the questions he formulated (Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978; Davis, 1975) were effectively measuring tolerance of leftist groups such as communists. The highly educated were more favorably disposed toward left-leaning groups than the poorly educated. Rather than measuring a general commitment to democratic norms, the Stouffer items tapped approval of particular groups. This criticism also called into question evidence of increases over time in the level of tolerance. Accordingly, as the salience of these left-wing groups declined, researchers observed an artifactual increase in levels of tolerance (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1982).

Fourth, according to some, the schools and the educational process, at least to the point of high school completion, are ineffective at passing on democratic values (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). Zellman and Sears (1971) concluded that political socialization of attitudes toward the specific civil liberty of free speech does occur during late childhood but that school children are taught the abstract principle only in slogan form. An even stronger criticism was offered by Merelman (1980). He concluded that schools do little to teach or encourage the learning of democratic values and cannot teach democratic values because the school itself is not a democratic place. According to Merelman, the need for order in the schools leads to the creation of an environment that fosters the learning of constraint, hierarchy, and inequality rather than values of freedom, equality, and tolerance.

COGNITIVE SOPHISTICATION AS THE MEDIATING LINK

One way to begin to resolve these competing claims is to focus on the qualities (e.g., reasoning processes, value commitments, etc.) that education is assumed to impart (Sniderman, Brody, and Kuklinski, 1984). Students of political tolerance have not devoted much attention to examining the process through which education is held to relate to tolerance. Only a few studies have set out to directly measure the intervening characteristics and processes that higher levels of education are purported to set into operation. Zellman and Sears (1971) found that tolerance for free speech among a large sample of California schoolchildren age 9 to 14 was positively related to a measure of divergent self-esteem. Divergent self-esteem was defined as an ability to entertain novel and unusual thoughts. Glock et al. (1975) found that cognitive sophistication, as measured by intellectual interests, openness to new ideas, and willingness to risk uncertainty and ambiguity, reduced anti-Semitism. McClosky and Brill (1983) reported that measures of political knowledge and of general intellectuality were related to an omnibus civil liberties scale.

But this research has either relied upon unusual samples, was unconcerned with assessing whether cognitive sophistication mediates education effects, or failed to consider cognitive sophistication in the context of other factors known to influence tolerance. The reasons why education is related to tolerance need to be pursued more directly. We suspect that the conceptual complexity and sophistication of the reasoning process itself is important, not years of education per se. Our first hypothesis, then, is that cognitive sophistication largely mediates the relationship between education and tolerance. In addition, we expect cognitive sophistication to exert effects on tolerance above and beyond other influences such as those of gender, race, region, age, urbanicity, ideology, and religion.

Conceptualizing and Measuring Tolerance

To this point we have treated tolerance as a concept that enjoys a widely understood, perhaps even straightforward meaning. There are several usages now available in the literature, two of particular importance. Much of the political tolerance research treats any expression of support for concrete use of a civil liberty as an expression of tolerance (Lawrence, 1976; McClosky and Brill, 1983). This assumption seems reasonable insofar as researchers have been careful to select groups well outside the social and political mainstream. Sullivan and colleagues challenged this view, however, arguing that tolerance presupposes explicit disapproval of the group or activity in question (see also Jackman, 1978). This claim has two immediate implications for measurement strategies and tests of theoretical ideas: first, and minimally, tolerance measures should ask about groups from both ends of the political spectrum; and second, it is essential to assess whether the person approves or disapproves of the target group.

Conclusions about the effects of education on tolerance may vary substantially by which definition of tolerance underlies the research. For example, contrary to previous literature, Sullivan and colleagues found no direct effect of education on their "content-controlled" measure of tolerance. This measure asked respondents to identify their least-liked group rather than eliciting reactions to a group preselected by the researcher. Although education tended to be related to the political ideology of the least-liked groups, with the highly educated tending to select right-wing groups, its effect on tolerance was small and mediated by political ideology and personality measures. Thus, education did have some of the traditionally anticipated psychological consequences—more secure and flexible orientations—but no strong effect, direct or indirect, on levels of tolerance.

The large number of previous studies that found education to have effects on tolerance stand in sharp contrast to the results of Sullivan and colleagues. We propose to test some of these ideas; in particular, we undertake a stringent test of the education–tolerance hypothesis. Our second major hypothesis is that education enhances tolerance even when the target group is disapproved or disliked. That is, higher levels of education are indeed the source of "sober second thought" about restricting the rights of those one opposes. Our first and second hypotheses are linked in that we expect cognitive sophistication to mediate the effect of education on tolerance even once feelings toward the target have been controlled. A principal reason why increasing years of education leads to respect for the rights of those one opposes is the greater cognitive sophistication more education imparts. In short, education changes cognitive style in ways that increase the likelihood of recognizing the importance of extending civil liberties to those we dislike.

The analysis proceeds in three parts. First, we develop a scale of political tolerance. Close attention to the dependent variable is in order since some recent analysts have questioned whether tolerance is a single dimension (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1979; McCutcheon, 1985). Second, we test the cognitive sophistication hypothesis in a multiple regression framework, using a Civil Liberties scale that involves five separate groups spanning the political spectrum. Third, we test for education and cognitive sophistication effects on tolerance of four separate target groups among those respondents holding explicitly negative attitudes toward the target group.

Data and Measures

We conducted secondary analysis of data from the 1984 General Social Survey (Davis and Smith, 1987). The GSS is a multistage probability sample of English-speaking adults living in noninstitutionalized settings in the continental United States. The number of completed cases was 1,473, which constitutes a response rate of .786. As a result of missing data and subgroup analyses our results are usually based on fewer cases.

Control variables. We are interested in the effects of education and cognitive sophistication on political tolerance above and beyond the contribution of other determinants of tolerance. Previous research indicates that we need to control for family income, age, gender, race, religious denomination,[1] region of the country, urbanicity, psychological insecurity,[2] and political ideology.[3]

Cognitive sophistication measure. Our purpose is to move beyond measures of years of formal schooling to measures that will tap the degree of complexity and sophistication characteristic of the reasoning processes of the individual. Our indicator of cognitive sophistication is the number of correct answers to a ten-word vocabulary test. Vocabulary is generally considered to be the best single measure of intelligence and is included in most assessments of intellectual functioning (Thorndike and Gallup, 1944; Zimmerman and Woo Sam, 1973). A rich vocabulary often indicates a sensitivity to new information and an ability to reorganize ideas in more complex ways and as differing situations demand. Others have also employed the vocabulary item as an indicator of cognitive sophistication (Krosnick and Alwin, 1987).[4]

Analysis and Results

TOLERANCE AS A SINGLE DIMENSION

The GSS asks respondents 15 questions that are versions of some of the questions Stouffer originally included in the Willingness to Tolerate Nonconformists Scale. These questions address three fundamental civil liberties issues related to freedom of expression: making a public speech, teaching at a college or university, and having a book at a public library. Respondents were asked each of the three questions in reference to members of five nonconformist groups: communists, atheists, homosexual men, persons believing that blacks are genetically inferior (racists), and persons who advocate doing away with

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[1] We treat religious denomination as three dummy variables, with the nonreligious as the omitted category and Jews, Catholics, and Protestants each identified in separate dummy variables.

[2] Psychological insecurity is measured with a three-item scale concerned with level of faith or trust in people (average interitem correlation = .38, alpha = .65).

[3] Political ideology is measured by respondent's self-placement on a seven-point scale running from extremely liberal at one end, through middle of the road, to extremely conservative at the opposite end.

[4] Cognitive sophistication is a somewhat imprecise term, but we lack straightforward improvements and it is now the commonly used term. Two alternative conceptualizations of the vocabulary measure suggested by reviewers are worth noting since they help clarify our meaning. One reviewer thought the term "intelligence" should be preferred. This is a much broader term and even if further narrowed to "verbal intelligence" would raise other types of problems. A second suggestion, closer to our intended meaning, views the vocabulary measure as tapping ability at conceptual thinking. This approach increases our leverage on interpreting the relationship between vocabulary and political tolerance. This reviewer suggested that "vocabulary measures the ability at abstract conceptual thinking and that civil liberties is really an abstract concept. Hence the relation."

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Tolerance Questions

Tolerance Question	Item Mean	Standard Deviation	*N*
Atheist speak	.69	.40	1,410
Atheist teach	.48	.50	1,373
Atheist book	.66	.48	1,383
Communist speak	.61	.49	1,382
Communist teach	.49	.50	1,340
Communist book	.62	.49	1,370
Racist speak	.59	.49	1,388
Racist teach	.42	.49	1,368
Racist book	.65	.48	1,375
Militarist speak	.58	.49	1,396
Militarist teach	.43	.49	1,375
Militarist book	.61	.49	1,390
Homosexual speak	.71	.45	1,367
Homosexual teach	.62	.49	1,363
Homosexual book	.61	.49	1,377

elections and letting the military run the country (militarists). The responses are dichotomous ("favor" or "not favor," "allow" or "not allow," and "fired" or "not fired") and are coded 0 for intolerant responses and 1 for tolerant responses (see Appendix for question wording).

Before directly examining the effects of education and cognitive sophistication on tolerance we must determine if the tolerance items form a reliable and conceptually valid dependent variable. Previous research has raised the possibility that specific acts may elicit greater support than others (Lawrence, 1976), that groups vary in the level of salience and threat they carry (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1979; Gibson and Bingham, 1982), and, in particular, that education and political ideology affect the choice of disliked groups (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1979; McCutcheon, 1985). Is tolerance a unidimensional construct that includes groups of left- and right-wing ideology and several types of acts or forms of expression?

We addressed this question in four ways, each of which suggests that there is a strong general tolerance dimension. First, we examined means for each of the tolerance items in order to determine if the five groups or the three types of acts differed markedly in the level of expressed tolerance. The item means shown in Table 1, which can be read as proportions given the 0–1 scoring of the items, shows modest indications that the group or type of behavior influences tolerance.

Table 2. Reliabilities for Group Subscales and Full Civil Liberties Scale

	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation	*N*
Subscale				
Atheist	.76	1.82	1.17	1,346
Communist	.79	1.71	1.24	1,318
Racist	.73	1.66	1.18	1,331
Militarist	.79	1.62	1.24	1,361
Homosexual	.83	1.96	1.22	1,320
Full Civil Liberties Scale	.89	9.06	5.01	1,176

Tolerance of the rights of gay men is usually a bit higher than that for other groups, but not markedly so. The right to teach in a college tends to elicit less support across groups than do the rights of free speech and having books in a library.

Second, we examined the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of group-specific tolerance scales and of the overall Civil Liberties scale. As Table 2 shows, each of the five group-specific tolerance scales has a reliability coefficient in excess of .7. The full Civil Liberties scale is highly reliable (alpha = .89). Third, as a check of external consistency we examined three sets of cross-tabulations for each of the 15 tolerance items using the theoretically important variables of education, age, and political ideology. Table 3 presents gamma coefficients for the relation of education, age, and political ideology to each tolerance question. In general, the component items of the Civil Liberties scale relate in a similar manner to these variables. There is some variation in the magnitude of the association between the tolerance items and age (gammas ranging from −.10 to −.44), education (gammas ranging from .35 to .53), and political conservatism (gammas ranging from −.05 to −.25). But none of these differences provides consistent evidence that expressed tolerance varies substantially by group or type of activity. For example, we do not find that the highly educated are tolerant of left-wing groups (e.g., communists) but intolerant of right-wing groups (e.g., militarists). Nor do we find that political liberals are tolerant only of left-wing groups but not right-wing groups.[5] There is a tendency, however, for the three racist items to have weaker relationships to education, age, and ideology relative to that found for the other four

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[5] Another indication that the expectation that education biases the targets of intolerance is overdrawn is the weak relationship between political ideology and education. The correlation between political ideology and level of education is quite small (−.04, n.s.).

Table 3. Relation of Tolerance Items to Education, Age, and Political Conservatism

Tolerance Question[a]	Education[b]	Age[c]	Conservatism[d]
Atheist speak	.51	−.32	−.14
Atheist teach	.48	−.44	−.22
Atheist book	.52	−.39	−.19
Communist speak	.53	−.23	−.14
Communist teach	.47	−.37	−.20
Communist book	.53	−.37	−.23
Racist speak	.35	−.14	−.05 n.s.
Racist teach	.29	−.16	−.08
Racist book	.38	−.10	−.11
Militarist speak	.46	−.31	−.14
Militarist teach	.47	−.44	−.16
Militarist book	.50	−.33	−.19
Homosexual speak	.52	−.31	−.16
Homosexual teach	.52	−.39	−.23
Homosexual book	.50	−.37	−.25

[a] All questions were scored so that high scores indicate higher tolerance and all cell entries are gammas. Unless indicated otherwise, all gammas are significant at or below the .05 level.

[b] Education was coded in four categories: 0–11 years, 12 years, 13–15 years, and 16 or more years.

[c] Age was coded in four categories: 18–29 years, 30–39 years, 40–59 years, and 60 or more years.

[d] Political conservatism was coded in five categories: liberal or extremely liberal, slightly liberal, middle of the road, slightly conservative, and conservative or extremely conservative.

groups; and within each of the five groups, the item pertaining to teaching at a college is more strongly related to these selected variables than the free speech and library book items.

Fourth, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis of the tolerance items using a principal components extraction and oblique rotation (it is clear that the items are intercorrelated). Three factors have eigenvalues that exceed Kaiser's criterion (1.0) (Table 4). The first factor is a very strong general tolerance dimension on which 10 of the 15 items load approximately .5 or higher and which accounts for 48.2% of the variance in the underlying correlations. The second factor captures something we have noted before, a modestly distinctive response to the prospect of members of a nonconformist group teaching at a college (8.2% of the variance). The third factor also captures a pattern already noted, the less tolerant response to racists, especially as contrasted to

Table 4. Oblique Factor Analysis of Political Tolerance Questions

Tolerance Question	Pattern Matrix Loading		
	1	2	3
Communist book	.86	−.07	−.02
Atheist book	.84	−.04	.08
Militarist book	.74	.08	.15
Communist speak	.72	.02	−.21
Atheist speak	.71	.02	−.12
Homosexual book	.71	.05	−.19
Racist book	.69	.06	.45
Militarist speak	.61	.13	.05
Homosexual speak	.59	.08	−.47
Racist speak	.48	.26	.39
Racist teach	−.11	.91	.27
Militarist teach	.02	.79	−.03
Atheist teach	.05	.77	−.16
Communist teach	.19	.53	−.25
Homosexual teach	.25	.45	−.52
Eigenvalue	7.23	1.22	1.11
Variance explained	48.2%	8.2%	7.4%

more tolerant responses to homosexuals (7.4% of the variance). The first and second factors are highly correlated ($r = .59$), with the third factor having weak negative relationships to the first ($r = -.10$) and second ($r = -.04$) factors.

Given broad similarity in levels of tolerance, high internal and external consistency of the items, and the factor analysis results, we conclude that there is a strong general tolerance dimension that includes groups from the left and right ends of the political spectrum. In addition, some attention must be paid to two possible complicating factors: college teaching is viewed somewhat differently than mere freedom of expression, and racists and homosexuals elicit somewhat different levels of tolerance.

EDUCATION, COGNITIVE SOPHISTICATION, AND TOLERANCE

We wish to know if education predicts tolerance and if part of the reason for greater tolerance among the highly educated is found in their more complex reasoning. Table 5 reports results for two multiple regression models predicting the responses to the full Civil Liberties

Table 5. Multiple Regression Models for the Civil Liberties Scale and Behavior-Specific Subscales

Variable	Civil Liberties Scale		College Teaching Subscale	Speaking and Library Book Subscale
	1	2		
Constant	9.19***	8.11***	2.24***	5.86***
Education	.51 (.30)***	.34 (.20)***	.14 (.22)***	.19 (.16)***
Vocabulary	—	.53 (.22)***	.13 (.15)***	.38 (.23)***
Psychological factors				
Political conservatism	−.35 (−.09)**	−.32 (−.08)**	−.11 (−.07)**	−.24 (−.09)***
Psychological insecurity	−.22 (−.10)***	−.16 (−.07)*	−.02 (−.02)	−.13 (−.09)**
Social background				
Age	−.07 (−.22)***	−.08 (−.25)***	−.03 (−.26)***	−.04 (−.22)***
Race (black = 1)	−.68 (−.04)	−.43 (−.03)	−.14 (−.02)	−.23 (−.02)
Sex (female = 1)	−.56 (−.05)*	−.70 (−.07)	−.14 (−.03)	−.52 (−.07)***
Region (South = 1)	−1.03 (−.10)***	−.83 (−.08)**	−.14 (−.03)	−.65 (−.09)***
Family income	.09 (.05)	.05 (.03)	.01 (.01)	.04 (.04)
Urbanicity	.08 (.05)	.10 (.06)*	.01 (.02)	.11 (.09)***
Jewish	−1.19 (−.03)	−.89 (−.02)	−.32 (−.02)	−.99 (−.03)
Catholic	−1.36 (−.12)*	−.95 (−.08)	−.22 (−.05)	−.68 (−.08)
Protestant	−1.92 (−.18)***	−1.59 (−.15)**	−.61 (−.15)**	−.94 (−.13)**
Adjusted R^2	.28	.31	.24	.29
N	1,025	1,025	1,086	1,088

NOTE: Figures in parentheses are standardized coefficients.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

scale. Model 1 shows that education makes a highly significant positive contribution to tolerance above and beyond the effects of age, gender, race, region, family income, religion, political conservatism, and psychological insecurity. Education is the single most important variable in the equation (partial beta = .30, $p < .001$).

Model 2 shows the effects of adding the cognitive sophistication measure. Vocabulary has a significant positive effect on tolerance (partial beta = .22, $p < .001$). It adds about 3% to the total variance explained. Importantly, the cognitive sophistication measure accounts for a large share (approximately 33%) of the effect of education on tolerance, reducing the raw regression coefficient for education from .51 to .34. To the extent having a richer vocabulary taps cognitive sophistication, these results show that differences in the complexity of the reasoning process account for a portion of the effect of education on tolerance.[6]

In order to determine if the type of behavior at issue influences tolerance, the last two columns of Table 5 report results using only the tolerance questions referring, respectively, to the College Teaching subscale as the dependent variable and to the Speaking and Library Book subscale as the dependent variable. Although there are some differences in the variables found to have significant effects, the strongest determinants of tolerance for the College Teaching and for the Speaking and Library Book subscales are largely the same. The highly educated and the cognitively sophisticated are more likely to support the right of nonconformist groups to hold college teaching positions or to engage in public speaking and have their publications generally available. Part of the effect of education on tolerance for both subscales is mediated by cognitive sophistication. Adding the vocabulary measure to the model reduced the size of the education coefficient by 22% for the College Teaching subscale and by 37% for the Speaking and Library Book subscale. Older and politically conservative respondents score as less tolerant on both subscales than their respective younger or liberal counterparts. Protestants score as least tolerant among the religious groups and as significantly less tolerant than the nonreligious.

[6] The modest reliability of the psychological insecurity measure may result in an underestimation of its mediating effects on the education–tolerance relationship. However, correcting for the reliability of the psychological insecurity measure is unlikely to alter the results of Table 5 to any significant degree. The uncorrected correlation between psychological insecurity and education is −.24; for psychological insecurity and the Civil Liberties scale the figure is −.16. Correcting these figures for attenuation using Cronbach's alpha increases the former figure to −.30 and the latter figure to −.20. These corrected correlations remain well below the uncorrected correlation of education with cognitive sophistication ($r = .49$), of education with the Civil Liberties scale ($r = .44$), and of cognitive sophistication with the Civil Liberties scale ($r = .36$).

There are, however, several differences between the two subscales. The differences suggest that for some respondents tolerance of college teaching, perhaps because it is seen as an authoritative or influential position from which to advocate nonconformist ideas, is taken as a more demanding behavior to tolerate. This is seen in the absence of effects on the College Teaching subscale for psychological insecurity, sex, region, and urbanicity. To be sure, the impact of these variables on the Speaking and Library Book subscale, as judged by the size of the standardized regression coefficients, are not large (i.e., each is below .10) and the direction (sign) of the effects is uniform. On the whole, the results show both the presence of a general tolerance dimension that is heavily influenced by a person's level of education and cognitive sophistication and a degree of difference in tolerance based on the type of action at issue.

AFFECT, EDUCATION, COGNITIVE SOPHISTICATION, AND TOLERANCE

A strong version of the education–tolerance hypothesis would posit that more education increases tolerance even when the target group is disapproved or disliked. That is, more education is the key source of "sober second thought" about restricting the rights of those one finds disagreeable. We tested this idea by examining the education–tolerance relationship for group-specific subscales only among respondents who expressed explicitly negative attitudes toward the respective target group. The GSS contains questions that provided reasonably direct, though not always ideal, measures of attitude toward four of the five target groups. The target groups, affect questions, and responses used as indicating a negative attitude toward the target group are as follows:

Communist: "Thinking about all the different kinds of governments in the world today, which of these statements comes closest to how you feel about Communism as a form of government? It's the worst kind of all? It's bad, but no worse than some others? It's all right for some countries? It's a good form of government?" ("It's the worst kind of all" treated as negative affect)

Homosexual: "What about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex—do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?" ("Always wrong" treated as negative affect)

Racist: "Do you think there should be laws against marriages between blacks and whites?" ("No" treated as negative affect)

Militarist: "As far as the people running these institutions are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them? Military?" ("Only some" or "hardly any" treated as negative affect)[7]

According to Sullivan and colleagues, one reason previous research found education effects on tolerance is that the highly educated have more positive attitudes toward the left-wing groups used in the original Stouffer scale. Our results partly support this claim. Education is related positively to the affect measures for communists (gamma = .21) and homosexuals (gamma = .43). Education is related negatively to the affect measures for the right-wing groups (gamma = −.53 for racists and −.25 for militarists). This pattern notwithstanding, Table 6 shows that the highly educated are more tolerant than the less well educated even when the analysis is restricted to respondents who are likely to have negative attitudes toward the target group. The group-specific subscale means increase significantly with education for each target group. Importantly, the education–tolerance relationship is upheld for left-wing and right-wing groups and does not vary appreciably in magnitude with group ideology.

The regressions in Table 7 show that, first, education is associated with higher tolerance among those opposed to the target group net of the effects of such factors as age, political conservatism, and psychological insecurity. The size of the unstandardized education coefficient is comparable across the four target groups, ranging from a low of .04 for the racist subscale to a high of .07 for the communist and militarist subscales. The magnitude of these effects is suggested by, for example, the communist subscale, where tolerance scores for those with 11 years of education would, under the model, differ from those of a person with 20 years of education by .63 points, or about 51% of a standard deviation unit.

Second, the impact of education on tolerance when the respondent explicitly opposes a group, though always important, is not as strong as the education effect in the absence of controls for target group affect. For example, tolerance scores under model 2 of Table 5 (i.e., the full Civil Liberties scale) of those with 11 years of education and those with 20 years of education would be separated by 3.06 points, or 61% of a standardized deviation unit. In contrast, this difference by education based on the models in Table 7 ranges from only 30% to 51% of a standard deviation unit. That is, part of the education effect on the full Civil Liberties scale reflects that scale's emphasis on left-wing groups (three of the five), toward whom the highly educated have more positive feelings.

Third, cognitive sophistication, as measured by respondent vocabu-

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[7] This question was asked of two-thirds of the sample because of a question wording experiment.

Table 6. Education and Tolerance Among Those with Negative Attitudes Toward the Target Group

	Mean Tolerance Score			
	Left-Wing Groups		Right-Wing Groups	
Education Level	Communist	Homosexual	Racist	Militarist
0–11 years	.99 (222)	1.21 (271)	1.36 (175)	1.14 (113)
12 years	1.33 (284)	1.59 (327)	1.69 (290)	1.46 (168)
13–15 years	1.61 (149)	1.89 (159)	1.90 (223)	1.97 (124)
16 or more years	2.13 (107)	2.34 (117)	2.26 (214)	2.41 (130)
F value	29.25***	27.37***	22.69***	30.94***
Eta	.32	.29	.26	.38
N	762	874	902	535

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 7. Multiple Regression Models of Tolerance Among Those with Negative Attitudes Toward the Target Group

	Left-Wing Groups		Right-Wing Groups	
Variable	Communist	Homosexual	Racist	Militarist
Constant	.72	1.26**	1.45***	1.14*
Education	.07 (.16)***	.06 (.13)**	.04 (.10)*	.07 (.17)***
Vocabulary	.13 (.22)***	.09 (.14)***	.07 (.13)**	.15 (.26)***
Psychological factors				
Political conservatism	−.08 (−.08)*	−.05 (−.05)	−.04 (−.05)	−.12 (−.13)**
Psychological insecurity	−.01 (−.03)	−.03 (−.05)	−.05 (−.09)*	.01 (.03)
Social background				
Age	−.01 (−.16)***	−.01 (−.23)***	−.01 (−.08)*	−.02 (−.23)***
Race (black = 1)	.07 (.02)	.14 (.04)	−.18 (−.05)	−.37 (−.09)*
Sex (female = 1)	−.26 (−.10)**	.01 (.00)	−.21 (−.09)**	−.17 (−.07)
Region (South = 1)	−.18 (−.07)*	−.16 (−.06)	−.02 (−.01)	−.01 (−.005)
Family income	.02 (.04)	.03 (.07)	.03 (.07)*	.00 (.00)
Urbanicity	.04 (.10)***	.03 (.09)**	.01 (.03)	.02 (.05)
Jewish	.17 (.01)	−.09 (−.01)	−.52 (−.06)	−.26 (−.03)
Catholic	−.08 (−.03)	.13 (.04)	−.15 (−.06)	−.13 (−.04)
Protestant	−.25 (−.09)	−.23 (−.08)	−.20 (−.09)	−.07 (−.03)
Adjusted R^2	.20	.17	.10	.26
N	687	775	830	488

NOTE: Figures in parentheses are standardized coefficients.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

lary score, is also significantly related to tolerance for each target group. Again, the vocabulary measure mediates a substantial fraction of the effect of education on tolerance. As compared to models excluding only the vocabulary measure (not shown in table), the figures in Table 7 show that adding the vocabulary measure reduces the size of the net education coefficient, at the low end, by 25% for the homosexual subscale and 42% at the high end for the militarist subscale. Falling in between are the racist and communist subscales, where the figures are 33% and 36%, respectively.

Fourth, the results in Table 7 suggest great similarity across groups in the other main determinants of tolerance (e.g., age effects and the direction of conservatism effects), but they also raise some potentially important group-specific differences. Most important among the latter is the finding that urbanicity is associated with higher tolerance for left-wing groups but is unrelated to tolerance of right-wing groups when the analysis is restricted to those with negative attitudes toward the target group.[8]

Discussion and Conclusions

Our research has three principal findings. First, there is a general tolerance dimension that embraces groups from both ends of the political spectrum. Regardless of the group or the type of behavior at issue, we found very high internal and external consistency for the tolerance scale and its component items. There is some evidence of behavior-specific and target group–specific patterns of response. None of these differences is so large or consistent as to call into question the existence of a general tolerance dimension. Second, education is strongly related to tolerance, even for a wide array of groups and even among those respondents explicitly opposed to the target group. Third, cognitive sophistication accounts for a substantial fraction of the effect of education on tolerance. Taken together, these findings provide confirmation of previous claims about the presence and sources (i.e., cognitive sophistication) of education effects on willingness to support the rights of disliked groups.

[8] As a check on our findings the models shown in Tables 5 and 7 were estimated using the 1987 General Social Survey data (Davis and Smith, 1987). This analysis confirms our results using the 1984 data. For example, education has a strong net effect on the full Civil Liberties scale ($b = .26$, $p < .001$), as does the vocabulary measure ($b = .59$, $p < .001$). Adding the vocabulary measure reduced the net education coefficient by 44%. Similarly, the main findings of the group-specific analyses examining only those with negative attitudes toward the target group are also confirmed. Education had positive net effects for the communist ($b = .05$, $p < .01$), homosexual ($b = .04$, $p < .05$), racist ($b = .05$, $p < .01$), and militarist ($b = .06$, $p < .001$) subscales. In each case, the vocabulary measure mediated a substantial fraction of the education effect.

Our research has several implications for advocates (Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978; Davis, 1975; Weil, 1985) and detractors (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1979; Jackman and Muha, 1984) of the education–tolerance hypothesis. Our findings suggest that previous research that relied on Stouffer-type items has not been seriously compromised by a focus on left-wing target groups (cf. Mueller, 1988). Questions on these groups behave much like those about right-wing groups and responses to both types of groups form an underlying tolerance dimension. By implication then, increases in levels of tolerance among the American mass public documented by Nunn, Crockett, and Williams (1978) and by Davis (1975) are, contrary to some interpretations (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1979), probably very real.

The difference between our results and those of Sullivan and colleagues lies in a distinction between tolerance under ordinary conditions and tolerance under extraordinary or extreme conditions. We have not employed the perceived threat, general norms, and personality measures used in the Sullivan model, but the effects of education we found occurred net of political ideology, trust in people (psychological insecurity), and feelings of disapproval of the target group, and without regard to the left- or right-wing proclivities of the target group.[9] This suggests that the key difference between our results and those of Sullivan and colleagues involves the differing dependent measures. We suspect that Sullivan and colleagues found only weak indirect effects of education on tolerance because their measure of tolerance identifies extremely disliked groups. For example, several of the target groups—the Ku Klux Klan, the Black Panthers, and the Symbionese Liberation Army—identified in the Sullivan measure have histories of violence and criminal activity. They are not merely advocates of nonconformist viewpoints. Tolerance of nonconformist but less extreme groups and the connection of education to the latter are probably underestimated by this measurement strategy.

Importantly, the sort of "ordinary" dislike/disapproval we have indexed may be a larger component of routine politics than is the extraordinary dislike/disapproval we suspect is accorded "least liked" groups. There are probably many more occasions when we are called upon to tolerate those views we merely dislike than those we find to be extraordinarily objectionable. There are also a number of nonconformist groups whose ideas and actions do not involve violence or lawbreaking but whose views are well outside the mainstream. In addition, other research shows that the positive effects of education on tolerance extend to greater approval among the highly educated for social protest by nonconformist groups (Hall, Rodeghier, and Useem, 1986). Our results suggest that education, partly via its impact on conceptual ability or cognitive sophistication, is important for tolerance of the merely disliked group but is unimportant for tolerance of the extraordinarily disliked group.

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[9] Lack of a perceived threat measure is not a liability. First, Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus did not find a relationship between perceived threat and education. Second, Green and Waxman (1987) found that education still affects how tolerance is expressed among those who feel threatened by a group. Our analysis differs also in that Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus included in their omnibus personality measure a dogmatism scale. Including a dogmatism measure might further reduce the impact of education on tolerance, but we do not have such a measure available. Importantly, such an effect, though as yet undemonstrated with these data, would be consistent with our cognitive sophistication hypothesis.

Jackman's analysis concerned attitudes toward broad social categories (gender, race, and class), not attitudes toward the expression of particular points of view. We believe our results indicate more than ideological sophistication on the part of the highly educated. In this sense, our results run counter to the interpretation of education effects proposed by Jackman. We suspect that the difference involves a middle ground between support for abstract democratic principles and support for more sweeping policy changes (e.g., affirmative action or mandatory school desegregation) that benefit particular groups. This middle ground involves support for the rights of individual members of nonconformist groups to advocate their ideas in public forums. As Weil (1985:459) recently argued, "the processes and reasons which constrain the better educated to give more liberal responses may not be as admirable as once thought, but something may be better than nothing: one presumes that the recipients of apparently liberal opinions (even if somewhat hypocritical) prefer such constraints to heartfelt illiberal responses." Activities such as political speech, the publication of one's views, and the right to hold prestigious positions (e.g., college teacher) are vital means of drawing attention to problems and persuading others to support policy changes. Viewed in this light, it is meaningful to find that education increases commitment to the extension of free-speech rights to those we dislike.

Sullivan's model and Jackman's research identify boundaries on the education–tolerance relationship. These boundaries constitute particular, and in some ways limited, conditions when education fails to increase tolerance. Our research shows the circumstances when education has large and important effects on tolerance. Of course, education is only one of several factors influencing tolerance and, as cohort analyses show, improvements in average educational attainment are not the main factor producing change over time in levels of tolerance. Future research should not view the education–tolerance relationship as either generally weak or strong. Rather, education is associated with higher levels of tolerance, even among those who oppose a group, so long as the group in question is not extraordinarily threatening or extreme. This relationship exists in part because education is associated with more sophisticated styles of reasoning.

Appendix: GSS Question Wording

Atheist speak. There are always some people whose ideas are considered bad or dangerous by other people. For instance, somebody who is against all churches and religion. If such a person wanted to make a speech in your (city/town/community) against churches and religion, should he be allowed to speak, or not?

Atheist teach. Should such a person be allowed to teach in a college or university, or not?

Atheist book. If some people in your community suggested that a book he wrote against churches and religion should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book, or not?

Communist speak. Now, I should like to ask you some questions about a man who admits he is a communist. Suppose this admitted communist wanted to make a speech in your community. Should he be allowed to speak, or not?

Communist teach. Suppose he is teaching in a college. Should he be fired, or not?

Communist book. Suppose he wrote a book which is in your public library. Somebody in your community suggests that the book should be removed from the library. Would you favor removing it or not?

Racist speak. Or, consider a person who believes that blacks are genetically inferior. If such a person wanted to make a speech in your community claiming that blacks are inferior, should he be allowed to speak, or not?

Racist teach. Should such a person be allowed to teach in a college or university, or not?

Racist book. If some people in your community suggested that a book he wrote which said blacks are inferior should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book, or not?

Militarist speak. Consider a person who advocates doing away with elections and letting the military run the country. If such a person wanted to make a speech in your community, should he be allowed to speak, or not?

Militarist teach. Should such a person be allowed to teach in a college or university, or not?

Militarist book. Suppose he wrote a book advocating doing away with elections and letting the military run the country. Somebody in your community suggests that the book be removed from the public library. Would you favor removing it, or not?

Homosexual speak. And what about a man who admits that he is a homosexual? Suppose this admitted homosexual wanted to make a speech in your community. Should he be allowed to speak, or not?

Homosexual teach. Should such a person be allowed to teach in a college or university, or not?

Homosexual book. If some people in your community suggested that a book he wrote in favor of homosexuality should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book, or not?

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SETTING THE POLLING AGENDA FOR THE ISSUE OF AIDS

JAMES W. DEARING

Abstract Most scholarly attention to survey results focuses on the answers to the questions asked. When attention is directed to the questions, it usually concerns methodological issues of bias, format, and wording. Scholarly attention has completely ignored the issue of why surveys include questions on some issues and not on others. The present research investigates the polling agenda for the issue of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) from 1981 to 1987. Evidence from several over-time analyses supports the hypotheses that (1) the mass media agenda set the polling agenda for the issue of AIDS, and (2) the way in which the AIDS issue was portrayed in the mass media influenced the way in which survey questions addressed the issue of AIDS. The specific over-time relationship is discussed.

> In framing their questionnaires these polling agencies have to clarify and define issues. . . . Whatever the reaction of the voter may be to the questionnaires he received, he has before him as a rule a list of questions which not only focus his attention upon important public problems, but may even stimulate a little more thought, and help him to clarify the issues. (Harwood L. Childs, 1940:58)

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The objective of the present research is to determine whether, and to what extent, the U.S. mass media influenced the importance given to the issue of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) on the U.S. polling agenda.

The relationship between public opinion polling and the mass media has been a subject of scholarly inquiry for at least 50 years. Past research concentrated on the quality and accuracy of media interpretations of survey results (Smith and Hogan, 1987; Bogart, 1972; Paletz et al., 1980). Scholars have also explored the impact of polling upon the mass media (Atkin and Guadino, 1984), the degree to which policy elites substitute mass media news coverage for public opinion survey results (Cohen, 1983), and the use of surveys by the mass media to "create news" (Gollin, 1988; Sabato, 1981:317). Missing from the study of the relationships between public opinion polling and the mass media, however, are investigations of the relationships between mass media coverage of an issue and public opinion polling about that issue.

According to Lippmann (1922), the perceptions of all persons, including journalists and policy elites, are influenced by the media. Such media influence would presumably extend to decision makers at survey organizations and guide the pollsters' choice of important issues. Whether they are or are not so influenced is the key question addressed and tested here.

The Concept of a Polling Agenda

The *polling agenda* is a ranking of various issues about which organizations that conduct surveys ask questions. The polling agenda is conceptualized in the tradition of *agenda-setting research*, the study of how public issues gain or lose importance over time. An *agenda* is a ranking of the relative importance of various public issues. The agenda can be measured at a point in time or through time. An *issue* is a subject of perceived importance. When over-time data analysis is conducted, agenda research describes and explains the cyclical patterns of attention and nonattention which an issue attracts (Downs, 1972; Smith, 1987). A recent review identified 162 agenda-setting studies (Rogers and Dearing, 1988).

Agenda setting by the mass media may do more than communicate the relative importance of various issues. The mass media may also convey how individuals are to consider and interpret various issues through their exposure to news coverage which frames issues in certain ways (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). For example, after numerous mass media stories about the possibility of contracting AIDS through blood transfusions, we expect that polling decision makers will ask questions of the public about the possibility of contracting AIDS through blood transfusions.

In past agenda-setting research, the public agenda was represented by the answers to public opinion survey questions. The questions *asked* represent the polling agenda. Confusion about this distinction would lead to a mistaken conclusion that the polling agenda may be reciprocally related to the mass media agenda. Such could not logically be the case. Mass media editors and reporters may plan stories in response to interesting survey responses, but not in response to the questions asked (unless the story was about the polling agenda). If survey *responses* are not interesting, neither they nor the questions are newsworthy.

The Issue of Aids

In December 1987 the World Health Organization reported there were 71,751 persons diagnosed with AIDS worldwide. The U.S. Public Health Service estimated that from 1.0 to 1.5 million Americans are infected with the virus, and that as many as 5 million Americans may be infected by 1991.

The spread of the *issue* of AIDS did not closely reflect the spread of the disease itself. The number of AIDS cases in the United States has followed an S-shaped diffusion curve. The issue of AIDS, when measured by mass media attention, has a spotty, irregular history. AIDS is best characterized as a slow-onset news issue. Nevertheless, AIDS differs markedly from such other slow-onset issues as inflation, unemployment, or defense spending, which have persisted for many years, rising and falling in issue-attention cycles (Downs, 1972). AIDS is relatively new, with the first cases in the United States diagnosed in 1981. Its beginnings trace to a small network of infected individuals (Klovdahl, 1985). Perhaps the issue of AIDS will follow a recurring issue pattern, like unemployment, but for now it is at a nascent stage.[1] The uniqueness of the issue of AIDS is enhanced by the fact that we can trace its beginning as a known disease, and as a public issue, to precise points in time. This quality greatly enhances the AIDS issue for purposes of the present research.

We expect that (1) *the mass media agenda positively influences the polling agenda for the issue of AIDS*. Undoubtedly, the mass media agenda has been influenced by public responses (i.e., the public agenda) to survey questions about AIDS. Our over-time analysis is expected to show the mass media occasionally responding to the release of survey results. Yet if Lippmann (1922) was correct, we should find stronger temporal evidence that the mass media agenda leads the polling agenda.

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[1] This possibility is buttressed by the predictions of epidemiologists and medical doctors that developing a vaccine for the AIDS virus may be decades in the future.

Furthermore, in line with Iyengar and Kinder (1987), we hypothesize that (2) *the mass media coverage of AIDS positively influences the way in which survey questions address the issue of AIDS*. Decision makers at survey organizations are free to write questions in any number of ways and about any particular issue (Field, 1983:215). Pollsters often make decisions about what issues to address and how to address these issues without much directive input from others, whether they work in independent survey organizations such as Gallup or in-house at mass media organizations (Lewis, 1988). An issue tends to be portrayed in different surveys in the same ways at about the same time. This tendency suggests that an external variable, such as mass media coverage, may influence the way in which pollsters think about an issue.

Lastly, we expect that (3) *the time between the stimulus of mass media coverage and the response by survey organizations will be one month or less*. Past agenda-setting studies have documented a lead-lag relationship between the mass media agenda and the public agenda from two weeks to nine months for various issues (Smith, 1987). We expect that the mass media influence polling decision makers relatively quickly because (1) pollsters and mass media editors enjoy close interpersonal relationships, (2) pollsters tend to be voracious consumers of mass media news, and (3) many issue surveys are created by pollsters who work in-house at mass media organizations.

Operationalizing the Polling Agenda

A data set containing questions to represent the polling agenda for the issue of AIDS was purchased from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. The full data set includes all questions ($N = 412$) and their answers which pertain to the issue of AIDS which were on file at the Roper Center through June 1987. Of these 412 questions and their answers, we excluded from our sample those questions which did not mention "AIDS" or "Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome" in the wording of the question, and which were not follow-up questions to previous questions which mentioned "AIDS" or "Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome" in the wording of the question or which were not sponsored by either independent survey organizations or by the mass media. This procedure left 381 questions about AIDS.[2]

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[2] Examples of questions included in the Roper data base but excluded from our sample include Gallup's most-important-problem question. This question neither refers to

The first survey to include one or more questions about AIDS was conducted on 13 June 1983 (Gallup). The last survey in our sample was conducted on 29 June 1987 (ABC News/*Washington Post*). At least two studies have attempted to synthesize public answers to survey questions about AIDS (Singer, Rogers, and Corcoran, 1988; Dearing and Rogers, 1988).

To determine whether poll questions on AIDS reflected the way in which the mass media portrayed AIDS, we categorized the 381 survey questions as having asked respondents about either (1) their knowledge, (2) their behavior, or (3) the importance of AIDS. For example, (1) "How much would you say you know about a medical condition called Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome—'AIDS'? Would you say that you know a great deal about it, or quite a bit, or not too much, or would you say you know hardly anything about 'AIDS'?" (*Los Angeles Times*, 12 December 1985); (2) "Is there anything you yourself are doing to avoid exposing yourself to AIDS?" (ABC News/*Washington Post*, 23 September 1985); and (3) "How worried are you that you or someone you know will get AIDS?" (Gallup Organization, 2 August 1985).

The present author and another coder, both of whom were very familiar with the issue of AIDS, decided that this categorization (of knowledge, behavior, and importance) did not discriminate adequately, given the diversity and size of the data set of survey questions about AIDS. Several more descriptive categories were added (and subtracted), until we found that all 381 questions could be classified within 18 categories (described below in Table 1). Intercoder and intracoder coefficients of reliability ranged from 75% to 85%.[3]

Operationalizing the Mass Media Agenda

To represent the mass media agenda for the issue of AIDS, all news stories about AIDS from June 1981 (the first news story about AIDS appeared on 5 June 1981) through June 1987 were counted if (1) they were broadcast on the network evening news programs of ABC or NBC (these data were obtained from the Vanderbilt Television News Archives) or (2) they appeared in the *Washington Post* (indexed through University Microfilms International) and the *New York Times*

AIDS, nor occurs as a follow-up question to a question about AIDS. Questions not sponsored by independent survey organizations or by the mass media were also omitted. Sponsors of these questions ($N = 14$) were the American Medical Association, the New York Department of Health, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

[3] A third coder also coded all survey questions about AIDS into the 18 categories. The percent of agreement also fell within the 75% to 85% range.

(from the *New York Times Index*).[4] A total of 2,695 mass media stories are included in the present analysis.

We attempted to categorize these stories into the 18 categories which we had established previously for the polling agenda for AIDS. The categories of polling questions more or less addressed the AIDS themes in the news stories. Four categories (see Table 1) had to be added; the news stories were coded into 22 categories.

The polling questions on AIDS, perhaps due to their brevity, were easily categorized. Single-indexed news story summaries, on the other hand, sometimes included several themes. Network news summaries, in particular, were sometimes quite diverse. Our two coders were instructed to code indexed news stories into as many thematic categories as were appropriate. For example, NBC News broadcast a two-minute story on AIDS on 9 October 1984. The lead sentence of the summary in the Vanderbilt Television News Archives' index read: "Possible breakthrough in discovering viral source of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) examined; details given." This entry also listed gay concerns about paranoia and oppression, the closing of bathhouses, and the Red Cross withdrawal of blood donations due to contamination with the AIDS virus. We coded this story summary into two categories: (1) "cures for AIDS, medical breakthroughs," and (2) "discrimination." Of our 2,695 news stories about AIDS, 3,667 such themes were coded, an average of 1.4 themes per news story.

Coefficients of reliability for coded mass media story summaries were computed using Scott's pi, which compensates for coding schemes with a large number of categories (Holsti, 1969:140). Expected agreement averaged 14%, while our observed agreement from samples of the total number of story themes averaged 63%, with Scott's pi equal to 58%. Table 1 ranks the categories for the polling questions and the mass media stories on the basis of the composite numbers of questions and stories in each category. Pearson rank-order correlation between the number of polling questions and the number of mass media themes for each category is .49, which is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Data Analyses and Results

The 381 questions were asked in 42 surveys, conducted by 13 different organizations or alliances thereof (for example, we consider ABC

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[4] Prior to late 1982, the disease was not known as "AIDS." Mass media stories were indexed under headings including "homosexuality," "gays," "virus," and "cancer." For a broader mass media analysis which includes the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *New York Times*, ABC, CBS, NBC, and local media in the San Francisco Bay Area, see Dearing and Rogers, 1988.

Table 1. Categories of Polling Questions and Mass Media Story Themes About AIDS

Category	Number of Questions (Rank)	Number of Story Themes (Rank)
Testing, civil rights, privacy	98 (1)	347 (3)
Transmissibility of AIDS	68 (2)	507 (2)
Importance of AIDS, how worried	37 (3)	129 (12)
Lifestyle changes, precautions	35 (4)	51 (14)
Knowledge about AIDS	27 (5)	250 (5)
Epidemic spread to the general population	19 (6)	204 (7)
Government spending and policy responses	19 (6)	624 (1)
Children with AIDS in school, threat to children	15 (8)	166 (8)
Sex education, teaching about AIDS	11 (9)	134 (11)
Other	10 (10)	147 (9)
Personally know anyone with AIDS	9 (11)	16 (18)
Discrimination	8 (12)	275 (4)
Responsibility of virus carriers, noncarriers	5 (13)	43 (16)
God's punishment, religion and gays	5 (13)	47 (15)
Media coverage	4 (15)	17 (17)
Cures, medical breakthroughs	4 (15)	236 (6)
Condom usage and advertisements	4 (15)	87 (13)
Medical care	3 (18)	143 (10)
Scientific dispute over the discovery of the AIDS virus[a]	—	24
Compassion for people with AIDS[a]	—	73
Nongovernment spending on AIDS[a]	—	57
Public figures with AIDS[a]	—	90
Totals	381	3,667

[a] Category added for the mass media news story themes about AIDS.

News surveys as different from ABC News/*Washington Post* surveys),[5] and were sponsored by 16 different sponsors or alliances thereof.[6] Eleven of the 42 surveys included only one question about AIDS; one survey by the *Los Angeles Times* contained 47 questions about AIDS. The mean number of questions asked about AIDS was 9 per survey. The time intervals between surveys varied from one day to 694 days. Eighty-four percent ($N = 321$) of the questions about AIDS were sponsored by mass media organizations; the remaining 16% ($N = 60$) were sponsored by independent survey organizations.

The number of persons with AIDS reported to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the number of survey questions asked about AIDS, and the mass media coverage of AIDS all increased over the six years from 1981 to 1987. The number of persons with AIDS followed a smooth diffusion curve. The number of survey questions and the number of mass media stories increased unevenly, in close parallel to each other, as Figure 1 shows. Both the media and polling agendas appear to respond to three major events: (1) a mid-1983 report that newborn babies in New York City had AIDS, which raised questions about the safety of the nation's blood supply; (2) actor Rock Hudson's diagnosis with AIDS in the summer of 1985; and (3) the controversy about testing for AIDS in spring 1987.

To test our first hypothesis (that mass media coverage positively influences the number of survey questions about AIDS), the day-to-day data for the number of media stories and the number of survey questions were each aggregated into monthlong periods to form two time series. A third monthly time series was formed from quarterly CDC reports of the number of persons with AIDS. This latter series proved to be a poor explanatory variable of either the amount of mass media coverage or the number of survey questions. Each series consisted of 73 months. The results of concomitant and lagged regression analyses for the media and poll series (Table 2) show that the correlation between the two time series, as is evident in Figure 1, is statistically significant at the .001 level. Lead and lag effects are clear, but which series is a better predictor of the other is less clear.

Regression analysis is based on the assumption of zero correlation

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[5] Included in the present analysis are the following organizations or alliances which conducted surveys containing questions on AIDS: ABC News; ABC News/*Washington Post;* Associated Press/Media General; CBS News/*New York Times;* Gallup; Harris; *Los Angeles Times;* Mark Clements Research; NBC News; NBC News/*Wall Street Journal;* Roper; Yankelovich Clancy Shulman; and Yankelovich, Skelly and White.

[6] Included in the present analysis are the following survey sponsors or alliances: ABC News; ABC News/*Washington Post;* Associated Press/Media General; CBS News/*New York Times;* Gallup; *Glamour Magazine;* Harris; *Los Angeles Times;* NBC News; NBC News/*Wall Street Journal; Newsweek; Prevention Magazine;* Roper; *Time; U.S. News & World Report; U.S. News & World Report*/CNN.

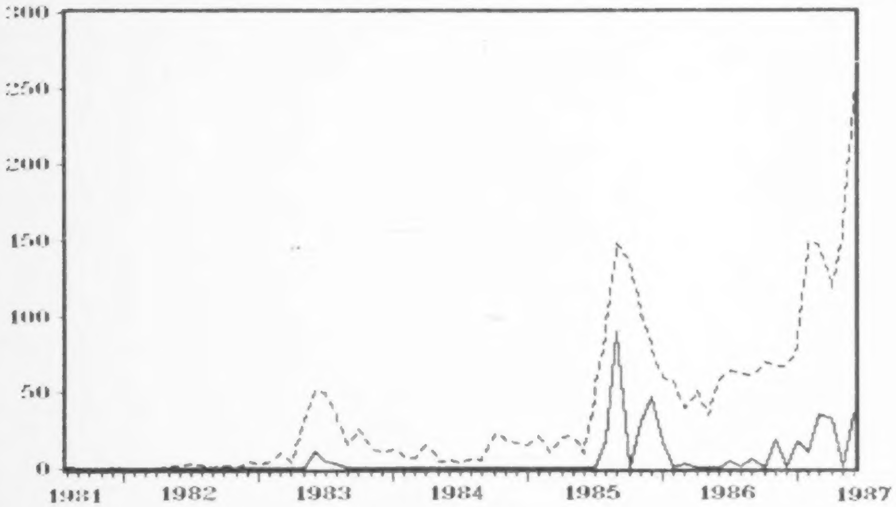

Figure 1. Time-Series Plot of the Number of Mass Media News Stories About AIDS (Dotted Line; Total = 2,695) and the Number of Survey Questions About AIDS (Solid Line; Total = 381), June 1981 Through June 1987 (73 Monthly Observations)

between error terms. When the polling agenda was tested as a predictor of the media agenda, a strong serial correlation of the error terms (Durbin-Watson statistic = 1.00) was present. The Durbin-Watson value should be a little over 2.00 if there is no error correlation. Error correlation worsened as survey questions were lagged by one month (DW = .73) and by two months (DW = .70). Inspection of the residuals confirmed that the error terms were correlated. Such a violation of regression theory to this degree renders an interpretation of the statistical results questionable when the polling agenda is tested as a predictor of the media agenda.

No serial correlation of the error terms was encountered when the media agenda was tested as a predictor of the polling agenda. The strongest relationship, judging from the beta weights, occurs when the media agenda is lagged one month as a predictor of the polling agenda. This finding suggests that the amount of mass media coverage in one month significantly influenced the number of polling questions asked about AIDS the next month. However, overlapping confidence intervals between concomitant media coverage, media coverage lagged by one month, and media coverage lagged by two months, suggest that the differences among the three predictors are not statistically significant at the .05 level. The amount of variance explained in the polling agenda is considerably less for the media agenda lagged by two months, which indicates that our best tested predictors of the polling agenda are the

Table 2. Summary of Time-Series Statistics About the Number of Mass Media Stories and the Number of Survey Questions About AIDS

Independent Variable	Beta	Standard Error	t Statistic	Significance (Two-tailed)	R^2
Polling agenda as dependent variable					
Media	.18	.02	7.23	.000	.42
Media(−1)	.21	.03	6.60	.000	.39
Media(−2)	.18	.03	5.05	.000	.27
Media agenda as dependent variable					
Polls	2.22	.31	7.03	.000	.42
Polls(−1)	1.79	.37	4.84	.000	.25
Polls(−2)	1.75	.37	4.72	.000	.24

NOTES: The beta weights here are unstandardized. The numbers reported in the bottom half of this table (with the polling agenda predicting the media agenda) are unreliable due to a strong correlation between the error terms.

media agenda one month before the polling agenda and the media agenda less than one month before the polling agenda.

In order to test the relationships between the media agenda and the polling agenda a second time, and with fewer zero data points in the polling agenda series (53 of the 73 observations had a value of zero), a shorter time series of 26 observations from May 1985 through June 1987 was studied (Figure 2). Seventeen of the 26 observations included nonzero data in the polling series. The findings are similar to the results for the entire six-year period: The polling agenda series residuals were highly correlated when that series was used as a predictor variable. The results were not significantly different at the .05 level when the polling agenda series was lagged one or two months.

The results of the media agenda as a predictor of the polling agenda in this shorter time series again suggested that media coverage in one month best determines the number of survey questions the following month (coefficient = .24, with a standard error of .08, which is significant at the .01 level). The R^2 (.23) may be a more accurate indication of the amount of variance in the polling agenda explained by the media agenda than is the R^2 of .39 in Table 2, since the large number of zero data points and near-zero data points in both the six-year media agenda and polling agenda time series may have inflated the percentage of variance explained.

The preceding data analyses compute beta weights and significance tests by the use of ordinary least squares regression. When assessing

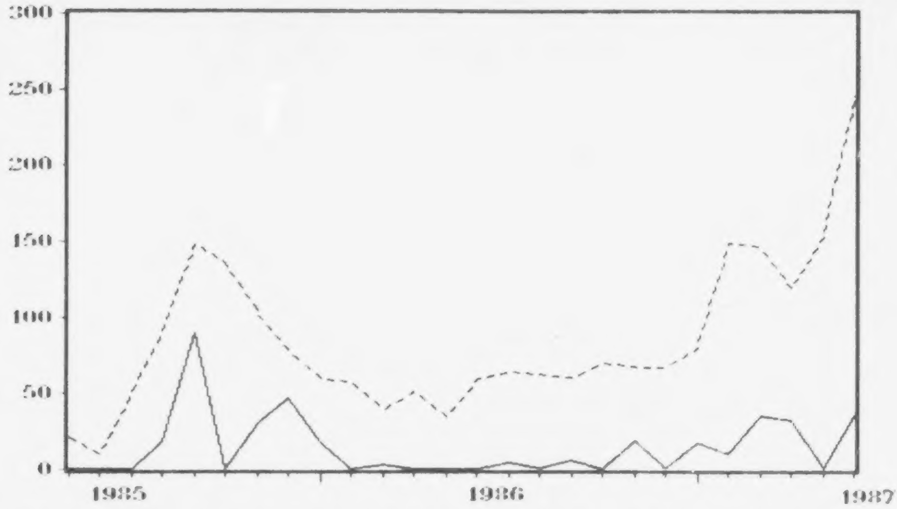

Figure 2. Time-Series Plot of Number of Mass Media News Stories About AIDS (Dotted Line) and the Number of Survey Questions About AIDS (Solid Line), May 1985 Through June 1987 (26 Monthly Observations)

over-time data, ordinary least squares regression computes reliable beta weight values, but its significance values may be unreliable (Cook and Campbell, 1979). To provide another test of the significance of our findings and to provide a third test of our first hypothesis (that the mass media agenda positively influences the polling agenda for AIDS), our two 73-observation time series were tested in a simultaneous transfer function model, which uses maximum likelihood regression (Scientific Computing Associates, 1986).

Results of this maximum likelihood regression confirmed our ordinary least squares regression results in the hypothesized direction (that the media agenda positively influences the polling agenda), and contradicted our earlier least squares findings that the effects of the polling agenda upon the media agenda were significant (Figure 3). In other words, maximum likelihood regression suggests that the relationship between the media agenda and the polling agenda is unidirectional. There is no significant feedback.[7]

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[7] Following is a summary of the statistics for each of the significant terms in the simultaneous transfer function model:

media(−1): B = .35, s.e. = .071, t value = 4.84.
media(−4): B = .20, s.e. = .073, t value = 2.68.
media[AR(1)]: B = .29, s.e. = .139, t value = 2.07.
polls[MA(3)]: B = −.61, s.e. = .116, t value = 5.23.
polls[AR(2)]: B = .39, s.e. = .125, t value = 3.07.

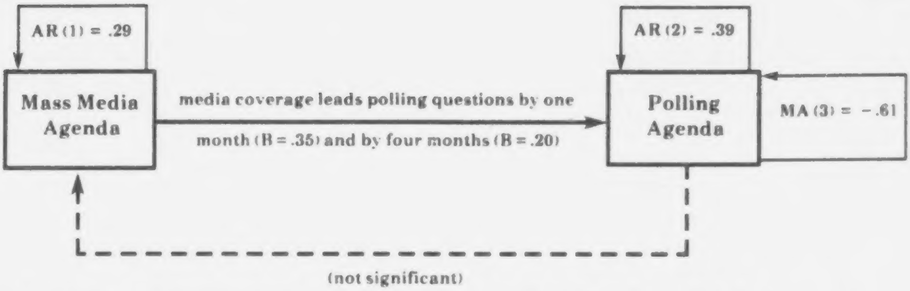
AR (1) = .29
AR (2) = .39
Mass Media Agenda
media coverage leads polling questions by one month (B = .35) and by four months (B = .20)
Polling Agenda
MA (3) = −.61
(not significant)

Figure 3. Simultaneous Transfer Function Model of Influence Between the Mass Media Agenda and the Polling Agenda

Simultaneous transfer function modeling also enables us to isolate the effect of the media series on the polling series, separate from the effect of the polling series upon itself. This isolation involves subtracting the amount of variance explained by a null model ($R^2 = .25$), which represents the effect of the polling series upon itself, from the amount of variance explained by the more comprehensive model ($R^2 = .44$) shown in Figure 3. The result, $R^2 = .19$, represents the independent contribution of the media agenda in explaining the polling agenda.

As a fourth test of our first hypothesis and as the sole test of our second hypothesis (that the way in which AIDS was portrayed in the mass media positively influenced the way in which survey questions addressed the issue of AIDS), a form of graphic analysis is used which allows us to specify a priori the expected time-ordered distribution of mass media coverage of a theme relative to the date when each survey question addressing the same theme was asked (Beniger, 1984:486). In essence, we expect that the bulk of media coverage about each theme will precede the date of the survey in which a question is asked about that same theme, and that the media coverage about each theme will taper off after the date of surveys in which questions are asked about

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The amount of variance explained in the media series is .83. The amount of variance explained in the polling series is .44.

"AR(1)," or "autoregressive function lagged one month," in this case means that the number of mass media stories in one month significantly influences the number of mass media stories the following month. "AR(2)," or "autoregressive function lagged two months," in this case means that the number of survey questions in one month significantly influences the number of survey questions two months later. "MA(3)," or "moving average function lagged three months," in this case means that the persistence of a random shock in the polling time series in one month significantly influences the persistence of a random shock in the polling time series three months later.

The media time series was nonstationary and required one differencing. The descriptive order of the media time series is ARIMA (1,1,0). The descriptive order of the polling time series is ARIMA (2,0,3).

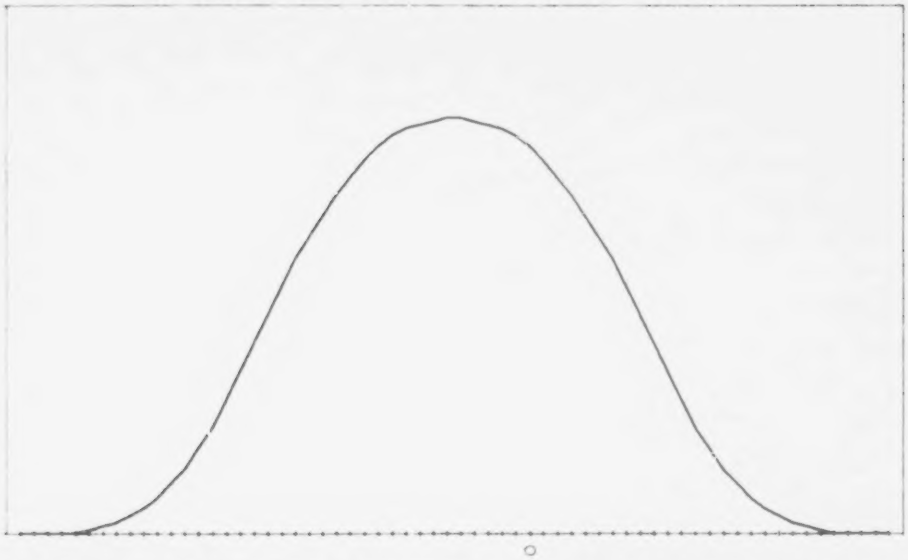

Figure 4. Hypothesized Relationship Between the Number of Mass Media Stories About a Subissue Theme Concerning AIDS (*X* Axis) and When Each Survey Question About That Subissue Theme Was Asked (Survey Date Represented by Point 0 on *X* Axis)

that same theme.[8] The distribution of news stories for each of the 18 themes should approximate a curve whose mode precedes the point in time representing when each survey question about that theme was asked (Figure 4). Whereas our time-series analyses considered real-time relationships, the relationship illustrated in Figure 4 represents relative time (the time of a news story relative to the time of a survey question). The zero point represents an agglomeration of survey dates.

The distribution of mass media stories on each theme should approximate a curve because of the nature of news issues. Scholars commonly think of potential public issues as competing with one another for mass media attention (Downs, 1972). Issues appear competitive because the various interests behind issues believe that mass media attention confers legitimacy to potential issues and is an indicator of power (Mansbach and Vasquez, 1981). Television time and newspaper space are limited and valued resources. So a public issue is only able to command news media attention for a limited time period. Issues which seem to persist are in fact recurrent. News is only what is "new"; previous (or old) issues only become issues again by the addition of new information (in the form of a new thematic emphasis). So the theoretical distribution of media stories on a given topic must approximate a curve or a series of curves (the latter will be the case if analyzing a longer time period or disaggregating a complex issue such as AIDS). The slope and time period covered may vary from issue to issue and from issue theme to issue theme.

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[8] In each case, "polling date" refers to the first day of survey data collection. The decision in survey organizations to conduct a poll asking about AIDS occurred some time prior to this date, so the exact lead time of mass media coverage is somewhat less than that indicated in Figures 5–9. The "rebound" of media coverage, which from our data appears to happen at about day +20, is actually somewhat shorter, since surveys typically take several days to complete and compute.

A sample of 5 categories was drawn from the 18 categories which contain both survey questions and mass media stories (Table 1). Two were drawn to represent categories with very few survey questions ("media coverage of AIDS" and "condom usage and condom advertising," each with four survey questions), one was drawn to represent categories with very many survey questions ("testing, civil rights, privacy," with 98 survey questions), and two were drawn to represent categories with a more-or-less average number of survey questions ("sex education, teaching students about AIDS," with 11, and "children with AIDS attending school," with 15). The remaining categories in Table 1 were not analyzed.

For each of the five categories, all of the mass media stories concerning that theme appearing from 60 days preceding to 30 days following the point in time when each survey question was asked were plotted by the time when they appeared. For example, for each of the 15 questions classified in the "children with AIDS attending school" category, all of the mass media stories dealing with this topic occurring from 60 days before to 30 days after the date on which each of the 15 survey questions was asked was plotted. Thus, three mass media stories coded "−15," "−4," and "+21" mean that three news story summaries were coded as reporting on children with AIDS attending school; one appeared 15 days prior to, one appeared four days prior to, and one appeared 21 days after a survey which contained a question on children with AIDS attending school. The plotted time points for each survey question dealing with one of the five categories are "overlapped" by aligning the actual date of the survey; hence the 90-day periods shown in Figures 5–9 represent an agglomeration of real time periods into relative times for each of the five categories of study, and not any 90 days in particular.

The visual results of Figures 5–9 provide evidence in varying degrees of support for both Hypotheses 1 and 2.[9] In each of the five cases, media coverage is greater prior to point 0 (which represents the date at which each survey question was asked) and less after that point. More-

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[9] The *y* axes in Figures 5–9 are automatically scaled, so one should be cautious in comparing the shapes of the distribution of each figure.

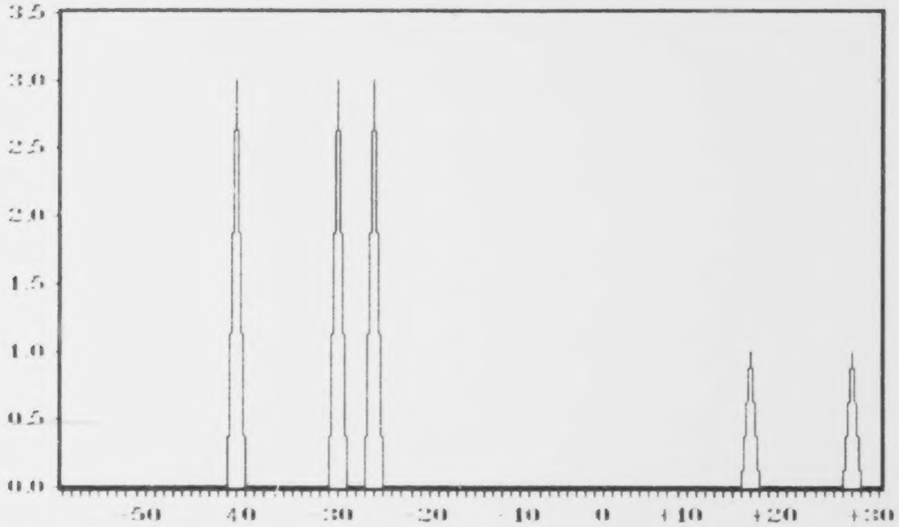

Figure 5. Over-Time Plot of the Number of Mass Media News Stories (Total = 17) Appearing Relative to the Date of Each of Four Survey Questions Asked About "Media Coverage" (All Survey Dates Represented by Point 0 on *X* Axis)

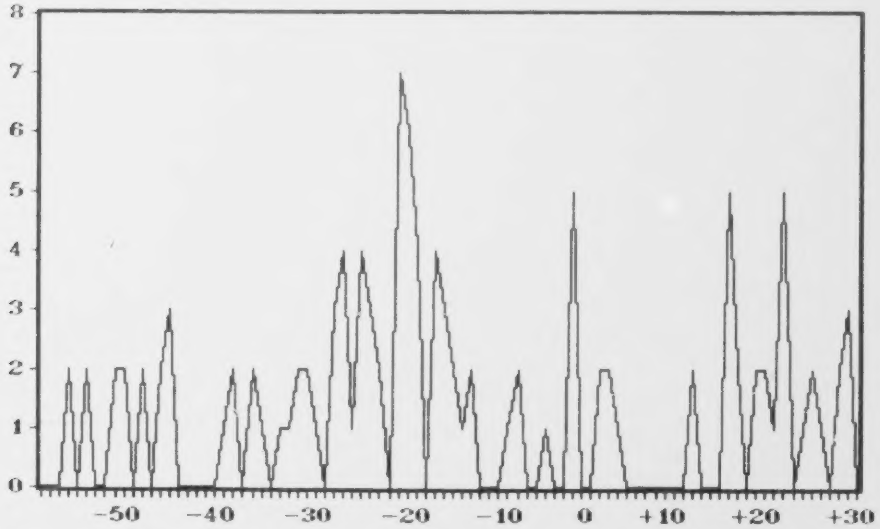

Figure 6. Over-Time Plot of the Number of Mass Media News Stories (Total = 87) Appearing Relative to the Date of Each of Four Survey Questions Asked About "Condom Usage and Condom Advertisements" (All Survey Dates Represented by Point 0 on *X* Axis)

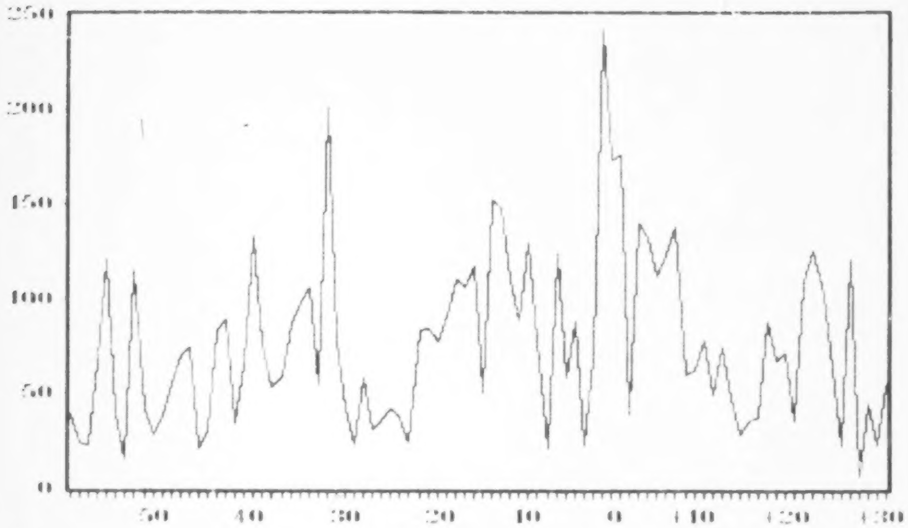

Figure 7. Over-Time Plot of the Number of Mass Media News Stories (Total = 347) Appearing Relative to the Date of Each of 98 Survey Questions Asked About "Testing, Civil Rights, Privacy" (All Survey Dates Represented by Point 0 on *X* Axis)

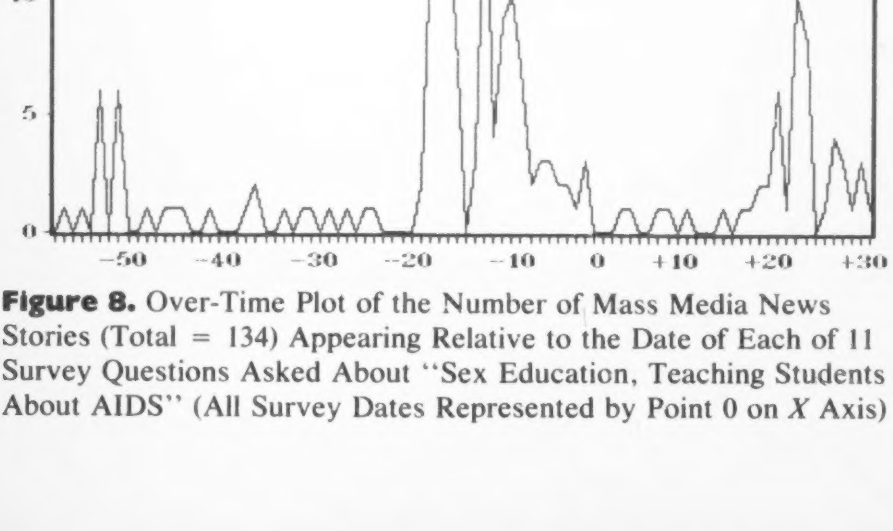

Figure 8. Over-Time Plot of the Number of Mass Media News Stories (Total = 134) Appearing Relative to the Date of Each of 11 Survey Questions Asked About "Sex Education, Teaching Students About AIDS" (All Survey Dates Represented by Point 0 on *X* Axis)

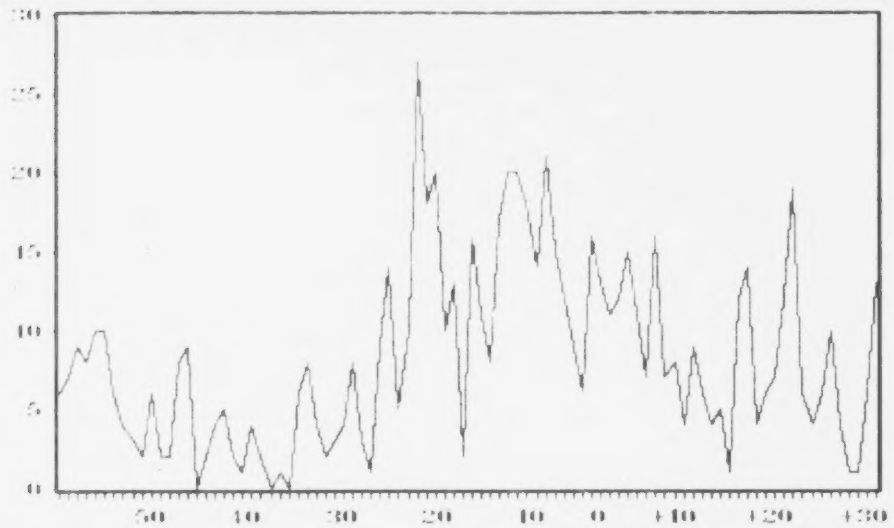

Figure 9. Over-Time Plot of the Number of Mass Media News Stories (Total = 166) Appearing Relative to the Date of Each of 15 Survey Questions Asked About "Children with AIDS in School" (All Survey Dates Represented by Point 0 on *X* Axis)

over, since these are daily time units, our five figures provide specific estimates of the time-order relationship between the media agenda and the polling agenda for these five AIDS subissues. Figures 6–9 show a peak in mass media coverage occurring 10 to 20 days prior to the date of survey questions about an AIDS subissue. Figures 6 and 7 show a peak of media attention two days prior to the date of survey questions. Figure 5 shows a longer period, between 25 to 40 days, in which survey questions follow peak media coverage of the AIDS subissue of "media coverage."

These results, taken together, provide evidence to support Hypothesis 3, that mass media coverage leads survey questions on the same AIDS subissue by one month or less. Figures 5–9 suggest a "rebound" in the amount of media coverage 15 to 25 days after each survey question was asked.

Discussion

Did the media agenda set the polling agenda for the issue of AIDS?[10] The results of each of the several tests reported here provide evidence in support of our three hypotheses. At least for this one issue the mass media agenda positively influenced the polling agenda. To rework Bernard C. Cohen's (1963) often-cited metaphor, the press may not be successful in telling survey decision makers what questions to ask, but they are seemingly successful in telling survey decision makers what to ask questions about.

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[10] In a prescriptive section on how to potentially overcome an elite bias in survey question selection, Lemert (1981:205) suggested that the mass media might serve as a manifest index of which issues deserve attention in public opinion polls. The hypotheses of the present study suggest that the same function of the mass media is already in operation, although in latent form.

We presented evidence that the way in which AIDS was portrayed in the mass media positively influenced the way that survey questions addressed the AIDS issue. The time lag for media influence seems to be from 10 to 20 days, with media stories about an AIDS subissue appearing prior to the dates at which survey questions about that subissue were asked. Our data suggest that there might be a "rebound" in media attention, which follows the date of survey data collection by approximately 15 to 25 days. This rebound may be attributed to the mass media attention given the survey results when they are released. However, survey organizations vary considerably in the time taken to complete a survey (from several hours to several weeks for our AIDS data set). No firm conclusions about the timing of this rebound in media attention can yet be drawn.

If pollsters at survey organizations are largely autonomous from organizational constraints in choosing which questions to ask in an issue survey (Lewis, 1988), the present results may be interpreted as meaning that decision makers at survey organizations unknowingly have their personal issue agendas set by exposure to mass media coverage of an issue. Some U.S. survey decision makers have a background in mass media work. About 84% of the survey questions asked about AIDS were directly sponsored by mass media organizations (many of the surveys on which these questions were asked were conducted inhouse by mass media organizations). Mass media exposure about an issue may put "pictures in the heads" of pollsters, leading them to ask questions about the same issue or subissue at the same time and in the same way.

If the mass media set the polling agenda, then survey organizations are channels for mass media–induced agenda setting. Poll results on a public issue like AIDS, when published and broadcast by the mass media, may reinforce the mass media's agenda-setting function upon the public by legitimizing the mass media's choice of an important issue (Gollin, 1980:450). This possibility becomes an especially important question for future agenda research if mass media audience members perceive reports of public opinion surveys differently than they perceive other news stories. Poll results purportedly offer a glimpse of the reality of public opinion about issues, rather than what issues decision makers at mass media or survey organizations think are important. Perhaps audience members assign more importance and credibility to news stories about themselves as "the public" than they do to other news stories which are more obviously the product of a writer's or an editor's perception. Future research on source credibility could explore this question.

There are other potential explanations for pollster convergence in asking questions about AIDS. Pollsters at major survey organizations seem to know each other well and talk with each other often. They also pay close attention to each other's surveys (interview with Irwin Lewis, director of the *Los Angeles Times* Poll, 20 January 1988). Also, executive members of the American Association for Public Opinion Research have suggested that survey questions about AIDS be standardized, although the wide variety of question wording in our data set indicate that this suggestion has not been heeded.

The present discussion suggests that the setting of polling agendas may be a complex matter which cannot be adequately explained by any single variable. Such probable complexity suggests that our present findings on the relationship between the mass media agenda and the polling agenda should be interpreted with due caution. Further research, perhaps using in-depth interviewing and participant observation, might reveal more about the process through which polling agendas are set, as well as about the people who set them. These approaches would also help to answer the looming question inherent in all closely correlated bivariate time series analyses, that of possible third-variable causation (though we did test for relationships with the number of persons reported with AIDS in the United States).[11]

Finally, the relationship between the media and polling agendas should be tested across a variety of issues. Media influence on surveys may function differently depending on the degree of newsworthiness of an issue and whether an issue arises quickly or slowly.

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[11] Both the publication and broadcast of mass media stories involve lag times between the decision to create a story and the appearance of the story. Yet in both cases, the lag time required should be less than the lag times between the decision to include questions about certain issues on a survey and putting the survey into the field. If a third variable similarly influences both the media agenda and the polling agenda, media and polling decision making might be occurring at the same time but *appear* delayed for the polling agenda. In-depth interviewing and participant observation are possible methods for studying and reaching conclusions about the timing of these decision-making processes.

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MARGINALITY AND LIBERALISM AMONG JEWISH ELITES

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Abstract Although much has been written about the Jewish proclivity toward liberalism, little has been written about elites who are Jewish. This article extensively compares American elites, both Jewish and non-Jewish, on a wide variety of social, economic, and political attitudes. Jewish elites are found to be consistently more liberal than their non-Jewish counterparts on four different measures of liberalism. We find small differences between religiously liberal and religiously conservative Jews. The differences between Jewish and non-Jewish elites persisted after controlling for a number of background variables including current occupation. These results are explained as a result of Jewish socialization into a tradition of marginality which has persisted despite changing conditions. This conclusion is supported by showing that parental ideology can partially predict respondents' ideological views.

High socioeconomic status remains one of the best predictors of Republican party support and conservative attitudes in the United States, although the relationship has weakened somewhat since the 1950s (e.g., Jensen, 1981; Ladd with Hadley, 1978; Nie, Verba, and Petrocik, 1976). Republicans are wealthier, more educated, and have higher-status jobs than Democrats and independents. Jewish liberalism has long confounded this general relationship. Jews are generally wealthier, better educated, and hold higher-status jobs than the average American (Cohen, 1983), but they remain the most liberal white ethnic

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group in the United States (Fisher, 1979; Lipset, 1981; Cohen, 1983; Nie, Verba, and Petrocik, 1976).

While Jewish Americans as a whole have been extensively studied by sociologists and political scientists (e.g., Cohen, 1983; Fisher, 1979; Liebman, 1973), the social and political background and outlook of American Jews in leadership positions have not been studied in detail. It is possible that assimilation has occurred at the highest pinnacles of success, creating an elite of American Jews as conservative as their Gentile counterparts.

The emergence of a small cadre of Jewish neoconservative intellectuals raises questions about the stability of Jewish liberalism. It is at least possible that they may have weakened the heretofore solid Jewish intellectual consensus in favor of liberalism (e.g., Kristol, 1983; Steinfels, 1979). The visibility of this group lends weight to the view that Jews, especially Jews who are elite members of various American institutions, are not as hostile to conservatism as they once were and thus do not support liberalism as whole-heartedly as they once did.

The first part of this paper compares the political ideology of Jewish elites with their Gentile counterparts. We find that elite Jews are more liberal than non-Jewish elites, and that this difference persists despite the introduction of numerous control variables.

The second part of this paper tackles a more difficult task: an exploration of the reasons for continued Jewish liberalism at the elite level. Competing explanations abound (e.g., Liebman, 1973; Cohen, 1983). Religious heritage is often given as one explanation for Jewish liberalism (e.g., Fuchs, 1956). Another commonly proposed explanation is ethnic discrimintion (e.g., Lipset, 1981).

Based on our analysis we have formulated still another explanation. We propose that the contemporary ideology of Jewish elites is a product of political socialization. Jewish liberalism is part of a family tradition of liberalism that developed in response to European conditions. The tradition persists despite the changes that have taken place in American society in recent years.

Data and Definitions

THE CONCEPT OF ELITE AND DEFINITION OF THE SAMPLE

Political scientists and sociologists since the 1950s have debated, sometimes with great acrimony, the nature of the American power structure. Is America ruled by the few or the many, are they in conflict or consensus, and how significant are differences in attitudes, values, and worldviews in an analysis of American elites?

Since C. Wright Mills (1956), two "schools" of social theory—the power elite theorists and the pluralists—have argued about the structure of American power. Theorists of the "power elite" school follow upon the work of Mills and continue to contend that power is fundamentally divided between two groups, the elite and the masses. The elite are homogeneous, cohesive, and autonomous, and represent the most exclusive segments of society. They seek to maximize their own power as opposed to mass interests. "The power elite," says Domhoff (1967:144), "is rooted in the upper class and serves the interests of the members of the upper class."

In contrast to the assumption of the power elite theorists, the "pluralists" start from the premise of multiple and varying groups of elites, for they believe that power in modern society reflects the structural complexities of modern bureaucratic society (Dahl, 1961; Keller, 1963; Polsby, 1963; Rose, 1967; Dye, 1986). The complexity of the modern state and society has resulted in different groups with different interests (i.e., interest groups), frequently pitted against each other (e.g., labor versus business). For the pluralists, power is diffuse, specialized, and differentiated. Unlike the power elite model, elites in a pluralist paradigm are multiple, fragmented, and often in conflict.

We rely largely on an institutional approach in order to designate elites in America. Following Suzanne Keller (1963), Thomas Dye (1986), and others, we define elites as occupants of leadership roles in institutions responsible for the allocation and distribution of resources, and those who create and distribute influential perceptions of reality. The growing diversity and complexity of American society produces growing diversity, complexity, specialization, and differentiation among strategic elites.

The data used in this study were collected as part of a larger study of American elites directed by Rothman (Rothman and Lichter, 1987; Lichter, Rothman, and Lichter, 1986; Rothman and Lichter, 1984; and Rothman, Lichter, and Lichter, forthcoming). The data analyzed in this article consist of responses to an extensive questionnaire administered by trained interviewers to random samples of elites. Our sample consists of 1,340 persons drawn from the following leadership groups: high-ranking military officers, corporate business leaders, corporate law partners in major law firms, upper-level federal civil servants, journalists working for leading news media, prime-time television producers, directors, and writers, major motion picture producers, writers, and directors, and leaders of public interest groups.[1]

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[1] The interviewing of the business and media samples took place in 1979, while interviewing for the other samples took place in 1982 and 1983. The companies responsible for the interviewing were Response Analysis Corporation of Princeton, NJ; Metro Research, Washington, DC; Depth Research, New York City; and Carol Davis Research, Los

The samples were selected as follows:

The military elite. The military are a random sample of field-grade officers from (a) the Pentagon phone book and (b) the class roster of the National Defense University. The Pentagon staff sample consists of general- and flag-grade officers, while the NDU sample consists of noncivilian students mostly at the rank of colonel or commander and above. The final sample size is 152. The response rate is 77%.

The business elite. The business sample consists of 242 upper- and middle-management personnel drawn from four Fortune 500 companies and one firm selected from *Fortune* lists of the 50 leading American retail outlets, banks, and public utilities. In each case, we developed a randomly based sample of top- and middle-management personnel from official company lists. The names of the corporations cannot be publicly disclosed since a requirement for cooperation in each case was a promise of anonymity. The response rate was 96%.

The federal civil service. The top-level federal bureaucrats constitute a random sample from the Office of Personnel Management's *List of Senior Executive Personnel.* Political appointees are excluded. Half the sample is drawn from "activist" agencies such as EPA, and half from "traditional" agencies such as Commerce or Agriculture. The final sample size is 200, with a response rate of 85%.

The corporate lawyers. The lawyers are a random sample of partners in New York and Washington law firms defined as "large" (more than 50 partners) in the *Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory.* The final sample size is 150, and the response rate is 66%.

The media elite. The media sample consists of a random sample of journalists and editors from the *New York Times,* the *Washington Post,* the *Wall Street Journal, Time, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report,* and the news organizations at NBC, ABC, CBS, and PBS. The sampling frame is derived from internal phone directories and, in the case of news magazines, the names of individuals listed on mastheads. Staff members with responsibility for news coverage were chosen in consultation with knowledgeable people. A computer-generated random sample was chosen from this pool of names. The final sample size is 238. The response rate is 74%.

The makers of prime-time television. The television sample is drawn from an initial list of 350 names of the most influential television writ-

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Angeles. All interviewers were employees of the firms conducting the research. They received special training for this study, attended an orientation seminar, and conducted preliminary practice inteviews. Response Analysis supervised the pretesting of the original questionnaire.

The questionnaires and a copy of the data tape for the media and business samples have been desposited with the Roper Center. We plan to send the other questionnaires and data there as well at some time in the future.

ers, producers, and executives. This is a reputational sampling frame derived from industry sources. In order to be included in the frame, persons had to be associated with the development of two or more successful prime-time television series. From this list, a random sample of 172 names was drawn. The final sample size is 104. The response rate is 60%.

The movie elite. The motion picture sample consists of a list of 149 writers, producers, and directors responsible for the fifty top-grossing films made between 1965 and 1982, according to listings in *Variety* magazine. The final sample size is 96, with a response rate of 64%.

The public interest elite. The public interest sample is drawn from lists of presidents and members of boards of directors of formal lobbying organizations, and attorneys in public interest law firms. For the lists of presidents and members of boards of directors of formal lobbying organizations, sources included *Public Interest Profiles, Washington Five,* and the *Encyclopedia of Associations.* For attorneys in public interest law firms, we drew upon the Ford Foundation's *Public Interest Law: Five Years Later* and the Council for Public Interest Law compendium *Balancing the Scales of Justice.* Knowledgeable individuals were also consulted. The sample is restricted to individuals affiliated with groups based in the Washington, DC, and New York metropolitan areas. We randomly sampled equal numbers from each sector. The final sample size is 158. The response rate is 84%.

CLASSIFYING JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH ELITES

How does one define a Jew? Does one include only the religiously observant? What about converts to another religion? In order to better unravel the complexities of Jewish political beliefs, we opted for a broad definition of who is Jewish. We classified individuals as "Jewish" if they gave their current religious affiliation as Jewish, if they were raised in the Jewish religion, or if they identified themselves as "Jewish" when asked about their ethnic descent.

This procedure has two advantages. First, it enabled us to obtain a sufficient number of cases for detailed analysis. Twenty-eight percent of our total sample of American elites, 375 out of 1,340, are Jewish. Second, it allows us to examine in some detail differences in liberalism between the various Jewish subgroups.

We subdivided our Jewish sample into subgroups based on their current religious affiliation. The subgroups are orthodox, conservative, reform, "just Jewish," none, and other. The first three categories are self-explanatory. The "just Jewish" group consists of those respondents who, when asked to give their current religion, reply "Jewish" or "just Jewish" without any specific denominational label. The "none" group consists of those respondents who were either raised Jewish or list "Jewish" as their ethnic identity, but who also list their current religion as "none." The group labeled "other" consists of those respondents who were raised Jewish but who have converted to another religion.[2]

Liberalism Among Elite Jewish Americans

Elite Jews are considerably more liberal than elite non-Jews as reflected in their voting behavior, self-labeled ideological position, and their responses to a wide variety of social, economic, and political attitude questions.

VOTING BEHAVIOR

Jewish elites are far more likely to vote for Democratic presidential candidates and far less likely to vote for Republican presidential candidates than non-Jewish elites (see Table 1). Elite Jews have consistently supported the Democratic candidate by margins of more than four to one. Support for the Republican candidate among Jewish elites has not increased since 1972.

Elite Jews are even stronger supporters of the Democrats than the Jewish public. Moreover, the gap between Jewish elites and the Jewish public has grown. The Jewish public until 1980 had been Democratic supporters, but in increasingly smaller percentages than Jewish elites. The gap was largest in 1980, when Carter won a majority of the elite Jewish vote, while Reagan won the plurality of the Jewish mass vote.[3]

In contrast to elite Jews, non-Jewish elites preferred the Democrats in 1968 and in 1976 by only a slight majority. They supported the

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[2] The numerical breakdown is as follows.

Religious Group	*N*	*Percent*
Orthodox	10	2.7%
Conservative	57	15.2%
Reform	91	24.3%
Just Jewish	88	23.5%
None	116	30.9%
Other	13	3.5%
Total	375	100.1%

Because of rounding, the percentages sum to slightly more than 100%.

[3] In 1984, a majority of Jewish voters supported Mondale (Schneider, 1984/1985). Unfortunately, we do not have comparable elite data.

Table 1. Voting Behavior, 1968–1980

	Jewish Public	Jewish Elite	Non-Jewish Elite	American Public
1968				
Humphrey	83%	89%	50%	43%
Nixon		8	48	43
1972				
McGovern	65%	85%	45%	38%
Nixon		15	54	61
1976				
Carter	74%	83%	52%	50%
Ford		15	47	48
1980				
Carter	38%	64%	38%	41%
Reagan	39	14	51	51
Anderson	19	22	10	7

Sources: Data for Jewish public 1968–1976 from Fisher, 1979 (only Democratic vote available). Data for Jewish public 1980 from Cohen, 1983. Data for American public from the U.S. Statistical Abstract, 1981. N = 1,333 for elites surveyed for 1968–1976 elections; N = 853 for elites surveyed for 1980 election.

Republicans in 1972 and again in 1980. Additionally, the gap between Gentile elites and the Gentile public is much smaller than that between elite Jews and the Jewish public in 1972 and in 1980.

Somewhat surprisingly, Jewish elites of all religious denominations generally prefer Democrats to Republicans in roughly similar proportions (see Table 2). The only group that consistently deviates from this pattern are those members of elite groups who were raised Jewish but who have converted to another religion. While the small number of these persons makes generalization hazardous, they are more likely to support Republican candiates than are other Jewish elites, but they are still not as supportive as non-Jewish elites.

Democratic support, however, has declined among some Jewish subgroups. The orthodox, conservatives, and "nones" supported McGovern in smaller proportions than they did Humphrey—support which, incidentally, translated into Republican votes. The same was not true in 1980. While all Jewish subgroups except the "others" supported Carter in smaller proportions in 1980 than in 1976, this resulted in a substantial increase in Republican support only among Orthodox Jews.

Table 2. Elite Jewish Vote by Jewish Religious Affiliation, 1968–1980

	Jewish Religious Affiliation					
	Orthodox	Conservative	Reform	Nondenominational	None	Other
1968 (N = 295)						
Humphrey	90%	93%	93%	89%	94%	73%
Nixon	10	7	7	11	6	27
1972 (N = 319)						
McGovern	70%	79%	92%	85%	87%	67%
Nixon	30	21	8	15	13	33
1976 (N = 338)						
Carter	90%	76%	89%	84%	89%	40%
Ford	10	24	11	16	11	60
1980 (N = 255)						
Carter	60%	47%	73%	71%	66%	50%
Reagan	20	20	14	9	10	25
Anderson	20	32	14	20	24	25

SELF-IDENTIFIED IDEOLOGY

We asked our sample of American elites to place themselves on a seven-point scale of political ideology, ranging from extremely conservative ("a score of one") to extremely liberal ("a score of seven") (see Table 3).

While one-third of the Jewish public calls itself liberal, almost three out of four elite Jews identify themselves as such. A similar gap occurs between elite Jews and elite non-Jews. Only 37% of the non-Jewish elite call themselves liberal.

Consistent with the voting data, we found little relationship between Jewish religious affiliation and self-identified liberalism (see Table 4). Members of the Jewish elite call themselves liberal, regardless of whether they are orthodox, conservative, reform, "just Jewish," or atheists.

Converts to other religions are again the only exception. Those Jewish elites who converted to other religions resemble non-Jewish elites more closely than they resemble other Jewish elites. Compared to other subgroups of Jewish elites, a larger proportion identify themselves as conservatives, and a smaller percentage see themselves as liberals.

Table 3. Self-Labeled Ideology, Jewish Versus Non-Jewish

Self-Identified Ideology	Jewish Public[a]	Jewish Elite[b]	Non-Jewish Elite[b]	American Public[a]
Liberal	33%	74%	37%	21%
Moderate	48	14	21	36
Conservative	19	12	42	43
N		375	958	

[a] Data from Cohen, 1983:145. Liberal = liberal + radical; moderate = moderate; conservative = conservative + very conservative.

[b] On our 7-point scale, conservative = 1–3; moderate = 4; liberal = 5–7.

Table 4. Self-Labeled Ideology and Jewish Religious Affiliation

	Jewish Religious Affiliation					
Self-Identified Ideology	Orthodox	Conservative	Reform	Nondenominational	None	Other
Liberal	70%	77%	75%	70%	76%	46%
Moderate	20	14	15	15	15	15
Conservative	10	9	10	15	9	38
N	10	57	91	88	116	13

Note: On our 7-point scale, conservative = 1–3; moderate = 4; liberal = 5–7.

POLITICAL ATTITUDES

Jewish elites also offered more liberal responses than non-Jewish elites to the overwhelming majority of attitude questions we asked (see Table 5).

Economic issues. Jewish elites are generally less favorable toward laissez-faire capitalism. A minority of Jewish elites but a majority of the non-Jewish elites think that less regulation of business is a good thing. Fewer members of the Jewish elite believe that private enterprise is fair to workers, and fewer also believe that government should not guarantee jobs. Likewise, more than two-thirds of the Jewish elite but less than half of the non-Jewish elite agree that the government should reduce the income gap between rich and poor.

Perhaps most indicative of their economic liberalism is the fact that 21% of Jewish elites believe that big corporations should be publicly owned—2.5 times that of the non-Jews. Even more strikingly, 31% of elite Jews think that the United States should move toward socialism, more than twice the proportion of non-Jewish elites.

Despite these differences in attitudes toward the economy, both groups agree on rewarding ability. Eighty-seven percent of elite Jews and 88% of elite non-Jews believe that the more able should earn more.

Alienation from the American system. Elite Jews are also more alienated than their Gentile counterparts. A larger proportion of elite Jews compared to elite non-Jews believe that the American legal system favors the wealthy; a larger proportion also believe that U.S. institutions need overhauling; and a majority of Jewish elites compared to roughly one in three non-Jewish elites think that the American social structure causes alienation.

Social issues. Jewish leaders are also considerably more liberal than their non-Jewish counterparts on social issues. More elite Jews than elite non-Jews believe that a woman has a right to choose whether to have an abortion, although a large majority of both groups support this idea. A much larger proportion of the Jewish elite also supports a homosexual's right to teach in public school. Similarly, only one in five elite Jews condemn homosexuality as wrong, compared to 49% of the non-Jewish elite. Less than a majority of Jewish elites also frown upon adultery, but two in three members of non-Jewish elite groups believe adultery is wrong.

The pattern is the same for other issues. There is a large gap between attitudes of elite Jews and non-Jews toward concern in our courts for criminals, while a larger percentage of Jewish elites believe that special preference should be given in hiring blacks.

Foreign policy issues. Jewish elites are also more liberal than non-Jewish elites on foreign policy questions. A larger percentage of elite Jews agree that the goal of American foreign policy is to protect big business. Less than half of the Jewish elites support the necessity of the CIA sometimes overthrowing foreign governments, compared to a majority of non-Jewish elites.

Responses to the Israel question, however, deviate from the general pattern. Most elite Jews and non-Jews believe in American support of Israel, but in this case a larger proportion of elite Jews compared to non-Jews believe that the United States has a moral obligation to defend the Jewish state.

DIMENSIONS OF LIBERALISM

How do these responses to individual attitude questions hang together? We created composite indicators of liberalism using factor analytic techniques (see Table 6). Three stable dimensions of liberalism

Table 5. Political Attitudes of Elites (Percentage Agreeing)

	Jewish	Non-Jewish
Economic Issues		
Less regulation of business is good for the country	44	73
The American private enterprise system is generally fair to working people	63	79
It is not the proper role of government to insure that everyone has a job	46	54
The government should work to substantially reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor	67	50
Big corporations should be taken out of private ownership and run in the public interest	21	8
The U.S. would be better off if it moved toward socialism[a]	31	14
Under a fair economic system, people with more ability should earn higher salaries	87	88
Alienation		
The American legal system mainly favors the wealthy	85	72
The United States needs a complete restructuring of its basic institutions	36	27
The structure of our society causes most people to feel alienated	52	34
Social Issues		
It is a woman's right to decide whether or not to have an abortion	96	83
Lesbians and homosexuals should not be allowed to teach in public schools	12	36
It is wrong for adults of the same sex to have sexual relations	20	49
Our environmental problems are not as serious as people have been led to believe	14	32
It is wrong for a married person to have sexual relations with someone other than his or her spouse	48	67

Table 5. *(Continued)*

	Jewish	Non-Jewish
There is too much concern in court for the rights of criminals[a]	15	64
Special preference in hiring should be given to blacks[a]	58	44
Foreign Policy Issues		
The main goal of foreign policy has been to protect U.S. business interests	61	40
It is sometimes necessary for the CIA to protect U.S. interests by undermining hostile governments	45	63
The United States has a moral obligation to prevent the destruction of Israel	88	60

NOTE: *N*s range from 1,312 to 1,330.

[a] Asked only of bureaucrats, the military, public interest leaders, and corporate lawyers.

Table 6. Mean Factor Scores of Elites

	Expressive Individualism	System Alienation	Collectivist Liberalism
Non-Jewish (*N* = 898)	97.96	99.05	99.00
Jewish (*N* = 348)	105.26	102.45	102.58
Orthodox	100.21	98.36	101.60
Conservative	103.08	99.42	103.82
Reform	103.95	104.39	104.60
Nondenominational	105.34	102.74	100.61
None	106.72	102.90	102.76
Other	100.66	106.50	93.50

NOTES: Expressive individualism = woman has right to abortion, gays should not teach, environmental problems not serious, adultery is wrong, homosexual relations wrong. System alienation = legal system favors wealthy, private enterprise fair to worker, U.S. institutions need overhaul, big corporations should be publicly owned, social structure causes alienation, goal of foreign policy is to protect business. Collectivist liberalism = less regulation of business is good, government should not guarantee jobs, U.S. private enterprise fair to workers, more able should earn more, government should reduce income gap, big corporations should be publicly owned, CIA overthrows sometimes necessary.

emerge.[4] Questions relating to such issues as abortion, gays teaching in school, the seriousness of environmental problems, adultery, and homosexual relations are highly correlated and form one dimension of liberalism, which, following Bellah, we call "expressive individualism" (Bellah et al., 1985).[5]

We call the second dimension of liberalism "system alienation." Questions concerning such issues as whether the legal system favors the wealthy, the fairness of private enterprise, the need to overhaul American institutions, the public ownership of corporations, social structure causing alienation, and the relationship between foreign policy and business make up this dimension of liberalism.

The third dimension of liberalism is "collectivist liberalism" following Shils (1980). Questions loading onto this dimension include: regulation of business, government guaranteeing jobs, the fairness of private enterprise, the relationship between ability and earnings, government's role in reducing the income gap, the public ownership of big corporations, and the necessity of the CIA overthrowing foreign governments.[6]

When comparing their factor scores, we find a significant ideological gap between Jewish elites and non-Jewish elites on these three dimensions of liberalism, consistent with our voting, self-identification, and attitudinal data. The ideological distance is greatest on questions of expressive individualism. The mean factor score for Jewish elites on expressive individualism is 105.26, while the mean factor score for non-Jewish elites on this dimension is 97.96. Jewish mean factor scores average about three points higher than non-Jewish factor scores on the alienation and collectivist liberalism dimensions.

When examining factor scores for each Jewish subgroup, we find that the more observant are the more conservative on issues of expressive individualism. The mean factor scores of orthodox Jewish elites (100.21) are more than six points lower than the mean factor score of atheistic elite Jews.

On the dimension of alienation, the trend is less clear. Here again reform Jews are more liberal than are the conservatives and orthodox,

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[4] The factor analyses reported here are preliminary in nature. They do not use all the questions reported in the text. In particular, the questions on socialism, affirmative action, and crime were not included because they were not asked of all groups in our sample.

[5] Bellah et al. (1985) first coined the phrase "expressive individualism" in reference to one strand of American culture, best represented by poems of Walt Whitman, focusing on the self and the primacy of self-expression in all aspects of life.

[6] The question concerning the necessity of CIA overthrows clearly doesn't fit the label we have given this factor. Fortunately, the factor score coefficient for this question that we used to compute the scale of collectivist liberalism is sufficiently small so as to make it unlikely to affect our overall results.

Table 7. Social Background of Jewish Elites (Percentages)

	Jewish	Non-Jewish
Male	90	89
College graduate	90	92
Personal income 100,000+	43	20
Parents' income above average	47	37
Father college graduate	38	38
Occupation		
Bureaucrats	11	16
Business	5	23
Law	16	9
News media	17	18
Military	0	16
Movies	14	4
Public interest	20	9
Television	16	5

NOTE: Ns range from 1,293 to 1,340.

who are again the most conservative. Yet nondenominational and atheist Jews have lower average scores than reform Jews and, most puzzling of all, the converts have the highest score of all the Jewish subgroups on this dimension.

A similar pattern can be found on the dimension of collectivist liberalism, except that the orthodox actually score above the nondenomination subgroup, and the converts have the lowest score of the Jewish subgroups on this dimension.

To summarize: Only on the dimension of expressive individualism does decreasing religiosity of the subgroups correlate with increasing liberalism; on alienation the orthodox and the conservatives are more conservative than the rest, but the overall trend is less clear; on the collectivist liberalism dimension there is no trend. The converts are especially puzzling. They are the most conservative of the subgroups on the dimensions of expressive individualism and collectivist liberalism, yet on system alienation they are the most liberal.

Why Liberalism Among Jewish Elites?

Is the greater liberalism among elite Jews due to other factors besides being Jewish? Table 7 presents data on the socioeconomic backgrounds of Jewish elites. Elite Jews do not substantially differ from elite non-Jews. Some of the background characteristics such as personal income and original family income should predispose Jewish elites to be more conservative.

As one would expect, almost all Jewish and non-Jewish elites are male. An equally large majority in both groups graduated from college, but elite Jews are currently more prosperous than their non-Jewish counterparts.

Roughly the same percentage in each group had fathers who were college graduates, but a larger proportion of Jewish elites grew up in families with above-average incomes. None of these characteristics accounts for the findings that Jewish elites are more liberal than non-Jewish elites.

An obvious source of difference between Jewish and non-Jewish elites is their distribution across occupations; Jewish elites are not evenly divided among all the occupational groups. The military elite and the business elite, two of the most conservative groups, contain a very small proportion of Jews, while the movies, television, and the public interest elite, three of the most liberal groups, have a large proportion of Jews.

This suggests that the differential occupational distribution of Jewish elites might account for their relative liberalism. However, it is possible that the development of political views closely attached to ethnic identity plays a role in career choice, in which case controlling for occupation is unnecessary. This is certainly the case with those choosing to join the public interest groups, although the literature supports the hypothesis for a much wider choice of fields (Ladd and Lipset, 1976; Mazur, 1986). We deal with the more difficult case for our hypothesis.

The hypothesis is tested using the four different measures of liberalism previously discussed: expressive individualism, alienation, collectivist liberalism, and self-identified liberalism. Separate multiple classification analyses were performed using all measures.[7]

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[7] Prior to doing the multiple classification analyses, we ran two-way analyses of variance on each measure in order to test for the possibility of interaction effects between occupational membership and Jewishness. We found no statistically significant interaction effects for expressive individualism and system alienation. However, we did find statistically significant interaction effects for self-identified liberalism and for collectivist liberalism at the $p < .05$ level of significance. We then examined specific differences between pairs of means (e.g., Jewish and non-Jewish bureaucrats) for each dimension. We found that on the expressive individualism dimension, Jewish military leaders (there are only two such persons in our sample) are slightly more conservative than non-Jewish military leaders. On the system alienation dimension we found that Jewish bureaucrats are slightly more conservative than non-Jewish bureaucrats. On the collectivist liberalism dimension we found that Jewish businessmen and Jewish journalists are slightly

Table 8. Liberalism by Jewishness, Controlling for Occupation (Multiple Classification Analysis)

	Unadjusted		Adjusted			
	Jewish	Non-Jewish	Jewish	Non-Jewish	Grand Mean	R^2
Expressive individualism	105.26	97.96*	102.52	99.02*	100	.26#
System alienation	102.45	99.05**	100.88	99.66**	100	.19#
Collectivist liberalism	102.58	99.00**	100.92	99.64**	100	.23#
Self-identified liberalism	5.25	3.93*	4.77	4.12*	4.30	.41#

* Jewish/non-Jewish difference significant at less than .0001 level.
** Jewish/non-Jewish difference significant at less than .05 level.
# Significant at less than .0001 level.

The results are presented in Table 8. Controlling for occupational membership reduces the average difference between Jews and non-Jews on all four measures. However, Jewish elites remain consistently more liberal than non-Jewish elites. The relationships are statistically significant at the $p < .0001$ level of significance for expressive individualism and self-identified liberalism, while the relationships are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level of significance for system alienation and collectivist liberalism.

As an additional check on the nonspuriousness of the Jewish effect, we ran regressions on our four measures of liberalism, including not only the Jewish and the occupation variables but also the sex of the respondent (female = 0, male = 1), age, the socioeconomic status of the father's job (using the Duncan scoring system), and region of origin (South = 1, other = 0).

In each regression, Jewish elites are more liberal than their non-Jewish counterparts, controlling for occupational membership, age, sex, father's socioeconomic status, and region of origin (see Table 9). The relationships are statistically significant at the $p < .0001$ level of

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more conservative than their non-Jewish counterparts. There were no unusual differences on the self-identified liberalism dimension except that Jewish bureaucrats are considerably more liberal than non-Jewish bureaucrats. All of the differences appear to be idiosyncratic, possibly due to sampling error.

Table 9. Liberalism by Jewishness, Controlling for Occupation and Other Background Variables (Unstandardized Regression Coefficients)

Independent Variable	Expressive Individualism	System Alienation	Self-Identified Liberalism	Collectivist Liberalism
Jewish	2.75**	1.63*	.65**	1.69*
South	-0.07	-0.46	-.08	.11
Age	-0.45	-0.11*	.00	-.46
Sex	-4.04**	-3.51*	-.36*	-3.45*
Father's SES	.30*	-0.02*	.00	-0.16
Occupation				
Media	-0.76	-1.73*	-.11	1.69
Lawyers	-1.37*	-5.23*	-.24*	.35
Movies	0.11	1.29	.12	-0.16
Bureaucrats	-2.90**	2.89**	-.13	1.16
Military	-6.50**	-3.87**	-.76**	-1.66
Public interest	-0.96	.85	.62**	11.75**
Business	-3.58**	-2.89**	-.69**	-3.32*
Constant	91.81**	98.92**	3.65**	104.72*
R^2	.27**	.23**	.42**	.50**

NOTE: N = 1,150.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .0001$.

significance for expressive individualism and self-identified liberalism. while the relationships are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level of significance for alienation and collectivist liberalism.

Why the Persistence of Elite Jewish Liberalism?

Several explanations for the persistence of Jewish liberalism have been proposed and criticized (e.g., Cohen, 1983; Glazer 1972; Liebman, 1973; and Fisher, 1979). One popular explanation, for example, is religious heritage. Adherents of this theory such as Fuchs (1956) contend that Jewish liberalism stems from a traditional religion based on universalism, cosmopolitanism, and concern for social justice. According to this theory, liberalism is a function of religion, and therefore the more religious should be more liberal. This is clearly not the case. Liebman (1973), Rothman and Lichter (1982), and Cohen (1983) show that more religious Jews are somewhat less, not more, liberal. Our data showing that the orthodox and the conservative are somewhat more politically conservative than the others also supports this position.

Lipset (1981:308) advances another common explanation for Jewish liberalism: "their sensitivity to ethnic discrimination and their lack of effective intercourse with the upper status groups in America."

This is sometimes described to be the strain resulting from status inconsistency. According to this theory, Jews are subjected by the larger society to contradictory expectations: the prejudice applied to minority group members and the prestige of high socioeconomic status. They support liberalism and its accompanying social changes to bring these two attributes into greater harmony by eliminating the prejudice.

The major stumbling block for this theory is that subsequent research has shown that "indicators of anti-Semitism have diminished steadily since the forties and are at an all-time low today" (Lipset, 1987:57). If levels of prejudice and discrimination decline, Jewish elites should not remain disproportionately liberal; their opinions should be distributed in a manner similar to that of non-Jewish elites. Our data show that Jewish elites continue to be a distinctively liberal group. Clearly prejudice alone cannot be the explanation for the persistence of Jewish liberalism.

We propose a third explanation, that of political socialization. It is generally accepted that party identification and political values are to some extent passed down from generation to generation among the general public, even though the relationship is much weaker now than in the past (e.g., Nie, Verba, and Petrocik, 1976; Jennings and Niemi, 1981).

The same passing-down of party loyalty and political values should be true of elites and thus of Jewish elites. This is a less obvious hypothesis than it might appear. The conventional wisdom among those who study elites is the opposite. After extensive review of the literature, Putnam (1976:93) concluded that "such characteristics as region of birth, size of hometown, ethnicity, and parent's occupation or education have little consistent relationship to current political opinions or behavior."

Despite his generalization, we speculate that Jewish elites have inherited a tradition of responding in particular ways to felt marginality. This response has remained strong, even though the conditions that initially gave rise to it have changed. Rothman and Lichter (1982) argue that the Jewish reaction to centuries of marginality in Christian society was the creation of a defensive subsystem—cultural, social, and familial—that reduced the sense of marginality. Emancipation and the end-ing of the ghetto, however, removed the protective cocoon and subjected Jews to what Cudhiddy (1974) called "the ordeal of civility"—coping alone with the coldness and hostility of nineteenth-century society.

Cudhiddy (1974) and Rothman and Lichter (1982) argue that the large majority of Jews rejected religious "orthodoxy," yet required some form of self-justification as a replacement. Ideological synthesis fulfilled that function. Redefining "the Jewish problem" as a specific instance of a universal problem with a corresponding universal solution reduced a sense of Jewish distinctiveness and inferiority.

Liberalism and radicalism (especially socialism) are primary instances of this kind of universalistic value system. Once the initial response was fixed, the strength of ideological conviction persisted—even after the initial condition that helped bring it about vanished and despite shifts in the content of liberalism

If ideological views are partially due to the persistence of a cultural tradition, then the most obvious means by which the tradition is passed down from generation to generation is through the family. Thus knowledge of parents' political beliefs should be a good predictor of our respondents' political beliefs.

The tradition of a Jewish response to marginality means that we should find a distinctive *political* tradition that Jewish parents pass down to their offspring. The political tradition handed down by Jewish parents of our elites is more likely to be a tradition of political liberalism. In contrast, many of the parents of non-Jewish elites would be expected to hand down a moderate or conservative political tradition.

Our data provide some evidence for this. Forty-five percent of the Jewish elite remember their fathers as liberal, 26% remember them as political moderates, and 19% describe their fathers as conservatives. Only 23% of the non-Jewish elite remember their fathers as liberal, and 20% remember them as moderates. The majority of non-Jewish elites remember their fathers as politically conservative.

The same is true of mothers' political ideology. Fifty-six percent of the Jewish elite describe their mothers as liberal, and 27% describe them as moderates, but only 17% remember them as conservatives. In contrast, 25% of the non-Jewish elite recall their mothers as liberal, 29% as moderates, and 46% as conservatives.

There are statistically significant positive correlations between parental political ideology and our respondents' political beliefs ($p < .001$). This applies to both Jews and non-Jews for our four measures of liberalism (expressive individualism, alienation, collectivist liberalism, and self-identified liberalism; see Table 10).

The relationship between parental and respondents' beliefs is further affected by the frequency with which respondents and parents talked

Table 10. Liberalism by Parental Views (Pearson Correlation)

Independent Variable	Expressive Individualism	System Alienation	Self-Identified Liberalism	Collectivist Liberalism
Father's liberalism	.148*	.122*	.379*	.218*
Mother's liberalism	.160*	.132*	.368*	.225*
N	1,199	1,199	1,233	1,199

*$p < .001$

about politics (see Table 11).[8] We tested the relationship using our four measures of liberalism as dependent variables and the following as independent variables: parental political ideology (the sum of mothers' and fathers' liberalism score), the frequency with which respondents remember talking about politics when growing up (never, seldom, frequently, and often), and the product (statistical interaction term) of parental ideology and frequency of political discussion. A test of our hypothesis is a test of the statistical significance of this interaction. The interaction term is statistically significant for alienation, collectivist liberalism, and self-identified liberalism at the $p < .05$ level.

However, the interaction term is nonsignificant for the case of expressive individualism and parents' ideology. We speculate that this may be because the issues that make up this factor were not political issues at the time our respondents were growing up and hence were simply not discussed within their families.

Conclusion

Despite their rise to the pinnacles of power in the United States, Jewish strategic elites have not become totally assimilated. Elite American Jews are more liberal than other American elites as measured by their voting records, self-labeled ideology, and political attitudes. This holds true even for the most traditional and ritualistically observant Jews.

Our data furthermore support the notion that the liberalism of elite Jews is rooted in patterns of early family socialization. It appears that response to a sense of marginality, like other political traditions, can

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[8] Thirty-eight percent of Jewish elites and 37% of non-Jewish elites recall talking about politics frequently with their parents.

Table 11. Liberalism by Parental Ideology, Discussion of Politics with Parents, and the Interaction of Parental Ideology and Discussion of Politics with Parents (Unstandardized Regression Coefficients)

Independent Variable	Expressive Individualism	System Alienation	Self-Identified Liberalism	Collectivist Liberalism
Parental ideology	.67	−.55	.07	.02
Discussed politics with parents	−.02	−2.72**	−.28**	−1.57
Interaction	−.07	.32**	.05**	.25**

NOTE: $N = 1{,}152$.
** $p < .05$

persist over long periods of time. Parental ideology is highly correlated with respondents' political beliefs for elite Jews and non-Jews alike. The more the family talked about politics, the stronger the relationship became, with the exception of expressive individualism.

There has been frequent talk and perhaps some wishful thinking regarding the prospect of a shift in the ideology of American Jews. Among elite Jews, our data show that support for the liberal agenda remains strong, stable, and cohesive as of the early 1980s. Our findings on political socialization raise the question of whether a realignment can occur before this cohort of Ameican Jews loses its prominence and is replaced by a cohort with different patterns of socialization.[9]

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[9] Whether recent events in the Middle East and the emergence in the Democratic party of an increasingly powerful black presence less supportive of Israel will transform the liberalism of American Jews is, at this point, an open question.

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THE EFFECT OF QUESTION WORDING ON PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT SPENDING

KENNETH A. RASINSKI

Abstract Analyses of question wording experiments on the General Social Survey spending items showed consistent wording effects for several issues across three years. An examination of types of wording change indicate that even minor changes can affect responses. However, an examination of interactions with respondent individual differences showed no consistent pattern.

Since 1973 the General Social Survey has included questions that ask the public to evaluate a variety of government spending policies. These "spending items" have played an important role in tracking public support for government fiscal involvement in 15 key policy areas such as defense, aid to minorities, education, and foreign aid. However, since most of the issues in the spending item questions can be described using a variety of labels, each potentially evoking a different symbol (Fee, 1981), and since the choice of a label for an issue can dramatically affect responses (Smith, 1987), it seemed natural to explore whether support for these issues depended upon the choice of words used to describe them.

The matter is further complicated because of unevenness in the wordings of the spending items. Some of the issues were described by the simple presentation of a label (e.g., space exploration, welfare), while others were described in a manner suggesting that an enhanced outcome would result from increased spending (e.g., improving and protecting the environment, halting the rising crime rate). It

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also seemed prudent to ask whether such enhancements influenced responses.

To study the effects of labeling and enhancement, split-ballot experiments were conducted in the 1984, 1985, and 1986 General Social Surveys. Many of the wording variations in these experiments were present in all three years, thus offering an excellent opportunity to examine the robustness of wording effects. The spending issues, their original wordings, the wording variations, and the years in which the variations appear are shown in Table 1. In the following sections I present an analysis of results from these experiments. Along with variations in question wording, I included education level, political ideology, and gender in the analysis to test for interactions between wording variation and respondent individual differences.

Method

Multinomial logit analysis was used to examine the effect of question wording and individual differences on responses to each of the spending items. Included in the analysis for each item within each year were the three-category response variable (spending too little, about right, or too much), variables contrasting wording variation, respondent gender, education level, and political ideology. Education level and political ideology were trichotomized such that each year's sample was divided into roughly three equal parts. As suggested by the GSS codebook (GSS, 1986:556), the appropriate weight variable was used to correct for problems with form-randomization procedures. All reported percentages and statistics take these weights into account. The small number of respondents who gave a "don't know" response to a particular spending item were excluded from the analysis for that item.

RESULTS

Though several interactions of wording with background characteristics were found, none were consistent across the three years, and only one interaction for one issue was consistent across two years. These interactions are presented elsewhere (Rasinski, 1988) and will not be examined further in this report. Three of the five issues in which the wording manipulation consisted of using different issue labels showed significant effects of label change across all three years. These issues are shown in Table 2. More support was found for halting crime than for law enforcement, for dealing with drug addiction than for drug rehabilitation, and for assistance to the poor than for welfare. The latter result has been documented by Smith (1987) for the 1984 GSS,

Table 1. GSS Wording Variations, 1984, 1985, and 1986

Version 1 (Original) 1984, 1985, and 1986	Version 2 1984, 1985, and 1986	Version 3 1984 Only
Are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on . . .		
Space exploration program	Space exploration	Advancing space exploration
Improving and protecting the environment	The environment	Improving and protecting the environment
Improving and protecting the nation's health	Health	Improving and protecting the nation's health
Solving the problems of the big cities	Assistance to big cities	Solving the problems of the big cities
Halting the rising crime rate	Law enforcement	Reducing crime
Dealing with drug addiction	Drug rehabilitation	Reducing drug addiction
Improving the nation's education system	Education	Improving the nation's education system
Improving the condition of blacks	Assistance to blacks	Improving the condition of blacks
The military, armaments and defense	National defense	Strengthening national defense
Foreign aid	Assistance to other countries	Helping other countries
Welfare	Assistance to the poor	Caring for the poor

Version 1 1984 Only	Version 2 1984 Only	Version 3 1984 Only
Are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on . . .		
Highways and bridges	Highways and bridges	Improving the condition of highways and bridges
Social Security	Social Security	Protecting Social Security
Mass transportation	Mass transportation	Improving mass transportation
Parks and recreation	Parks and recreation	Improving parks and recreation

Table 2. Effect of Label Changes on Support for Crime, Drug Addiction, and Welfare Spending Items

Year	Percent Saying Too Little Is Spent		Coeff. (S.E.)	χ^2 (*d.f.*)	*p*
	Crime				
	Halting Rising Crime Rate	Law Enforcement			
1984	69.3	56.5	.293 (.076)	16.31 (2)	<.001
1985	67.3	57.8	.118 (.054)	14.36 (2)	<.001
1986	66.8	52.9	.204 (.054)	28.11 (2)	<.001
	Drug Addiction				
	Dealing with Drug Addiction	Drug Rehabilitation			
1984	64.4	49.4	.325 (.068)	21.36 (2)	<.001
1985	66.6	58.0	.158 (.054)	20.31 (2)	<.001
1986	60.7	56.3	.125 (.049)	6.53 (2)	<.038
	Welfare				
	Assistance to the Poor	Welfare			
1984	64.1	25.2	.749 (.066)	165.2 (2)	<.001
1985	65.2	19.8	.760 (.050)	356.8 (2)	<.001
1986	62.8	23.1	.650 (.049)	282.5 (2)	<.001

NOTES: Chi-square statistics represent only the overall effect of wording variation on the three-level response variable. Coefficients and standard errors are from the multinomial logit analyses including background factors. These coefficients contrast responses given in the table with the spending "about right" position.

and he reports similar results found in other surveys. The present analysis attests to the robustness of the effect of wording on support for social welfare.

In the 1984 survey all 15 issues had manipulations in which the wording change consisted either of adding a positive verb before the label describing the program (e.g., advancing space exploration vs. space exploration) or of changing the existing verb to a more positive verb or verb phrase (e.g., assistance to big cities vs. solving problems of big cities). Effects for five of the latter type of wording variations were found but only two of these five, spending to help cities and to help blacks, showed significant changes due to wording variation across the three surveys. Results for these two issues are presented in Table 3.

Results for all three years show that greater support was found for "solving the problem of big cities" than for "assistance to big cities." Similarly, more support was found for "improving the conditions of blacks" than for "assistance to blacks." An effect of merely preceding the issue label with a positive verb was found for only one issue, social security. Because the enhancement experiment for social security was only conducted in 1984, an assessment of the replicability of this result cannot be made, and the results should be interpreted with caution. The effect is shown at the bottom of Table 3. Substantially more support was reported for "protecting social security" than for "social security."

Conclusion

The question wording experiments show that issue labeling and enhancement can have a substantial effect on public support for some issues. The effect of labeling was quite robust, showing similar effects within issues across the three years. Smith (1987) has argued that different labels for the welfare issue may bring to mind different associations, actually changing the stimuli to which respondents are reacting. The present results suggest that this effect may not be limited to welfare. For example, when a respondent thinks about halting crime he or she may bring to mind a set of uniformly positive beliefs and feelings associated with the personal and social benefits of a lowered crime rate. Conversely, the reference to law enforcement may call up a host of both positive and negative beliefs and feelings, such as those associated with crime prevention, law and order, traffic and parking tickets, corruption, and police brutality, leading to a lowered overall level of support. Similarly, for the drug addiction issue the wording "dealing

Table 3. Effects of Enhancement on Support for Assistance to Cities, Blacks, and Social Security

Year	Percent Saying Too Little Is Spent		Coeff. (S.E.)	χ^2 (*d.f.*)	*p*
	Cities				
	Assistance to Big Cities	Solving Problems of Big Cities			
1984	21.3	52.0	.341 (.038)	107.99 (2)	<.001
1985	20.8	45.7	.467 (.033)	137.73 (2)	<.001
1986	17.7	48.2	.464 (.048)	146.03 (2)	<.001
	Blacks				
	Assistance to Blacks	Improving Conditions of Blacks			
1984	26.8	36.5	.121 (.034)	19.80 (2)	<.001
1985	28.2	33.7	.098 (.044)	10.88 (2)	<.004
1986	27.8	36.5	.208 (.046)	33.85 (2)	<.001
	Social Security				
	Social Security	Protecting Social Security			
1984	53.2	68.2	.164 (.064)	29.26 (2)	<.001

NOTES: Chi-square statistics represent only the overall effect of wording variation on the three-level response variable. Coefficients and standard errors are from the multinomial logit analyses including background factors. These coefficients contrast responses given in the table with the spending "about right" position.

with drug addiction" may suggest a more positive stance toward the problem, while the wording "drug rehabilitation" may seem static and untantalizing to the imagination.

The effect of substituting the verb preceding the spending item with another more positive verb phrase was also consistent across years and across different issues. The simple enhancement effect (preceding an issue with a single positive verb) only affected responses to one issue, but the robustness of the effect cannot be determined because the variations were not replicated across the three years.

Many studies have shown wording effects before, but we currently have little understanding about when and why such effects occur. While the present evidence does not provide answers to these questions, it does contribute new examples of successful and failed question wording experiments. A compendium of such evidence may eventually facilitate the formulation of a general theory of question wording effects. However, it seems more likely that progress in this area will arise from the efforts of researchers in the area of cognition and communication who are currently applying their efforts to understanding how people answer survey questions (e.g., Tourangeau and Rasinski, 1988).

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THE POLLS—A REVIEW

SURVEY ORGANIZATION DIFFERENCES IN ESTIMATING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS

JOHN P. ROBINSON

There are two main sources of arts participation data for the United States. One is the survey of public participation in the arts (SPPA '82 and SPPA '85), conducted for the National Endowment for the Arts by the U.S. Bureau of the Census across the full twelve months of 1982 and the first six months of 1985. In each month of those years, a separate random sample of about 1,500–2,000 individuals aged 18 and over were interviewed personally as a supplement to the National Crime Survey. The SPPA's "core" questions concerned the extent to which respondents had attended arts performances (e.g., jazz concerts, opera, ballet) in the previous year.

In March 1984 (as in 1980 and 1987), Louis Harris and Associates (1984) independently conducted its "America and the Arts" survey. This public opinion study included several questions on the public's participation in these same types of arts activities. While the specific questions did vary from those asked in the SPPA and there are no outside validity data for complete verification, there is enough commonality in content and consistency in results across activities to isolate significant differences across the two survey organizations.

This review compares the survey estimate of arts and recreational participation for these two major data sources—one governmental and the other commercial. The self-report questions are not identical and differ somewhat in time of data collection so that the comparisons are not true experiments in the sense that the classic Stouffer (1955), Steiner (1963), Schuman and Presser (1981), and Bishop, Oldendick, and Tuchfarber (e.g., 1982) studies were. The analysis does involve comparing some questions that involve multiple behaviors in the same item (e.g., "Did you do activity *x* or *y*?") with those that ask about a single activity ("Did you do activity *x*?" and "Did you do activity

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y?"); these questions may not be equivalent in terms of respondent perception or response.

Table 1 describes the basic parameters of the 1982 and 1984 studies, which were designed similarly and produced findings consistent with those of other years for both survey organizations. It can be seen first that SPPA '82 had over ten times the sample size ($N = 17{,}254$) of the Harris study ($N = 1{,}504$); in 1985, identical SPPA procedures were used with 13,675 respondents across the first six months of the year. SPPA '82 was conducted across the full 12 months of the year, rather than the single month of March covered in the Harris survey. (The March survey did not produce different results from the eleven other months in SPPA '82.) Most of the SPPA data were collected by in-person interviews conducted in the respondents' homes; interviews were conducted by telephone in the Harris study.

The sampling frame for SPPA included all households in the country; as in 1980 and 1987, the Harris sample frame was by nature restricted to households with telephones. In the Harris study, one individual aged 18 or older within each selected household was chosen by the oldest-youngest, male-female technique; in SPPA, all individuals aged 18 or older were selected into the sample.

The Harris study reports no overall response rate figures. Two call-backs were made over a three-day period to nonresponding numbers, and one attempt was made to convert refusals. The Harris (1984) methodological report does not give figures on how many telephone numbers were dialed or how many refusals were encountered. In SPPA '82, the Census Bureau achieved a response rate of over 85% for every month; this is lower than most Census Bureau studies, mainly because it was the "exit interview" from the National Crime Survey, and most respondents had been interviewed six times previously over a three-year period.

The last column of Table 1 provides parallel details for a third national survey, one conducted by the University of Maryland's Survey Research Center. The ARTS '83–84 survey was designed as an expansion of the SPPA '82 survey, but included many of the same core questions as its initial items. The sample, however, was a completely independent one, conducted by RDD telephone (like the Harris Surveys) but in two separate waves—one in June 1983 and the other in January 1984.

Internal Factors Affecting Response Differences

The effects of four "internal" factors (context effects, question time frame, question wording, and data weighting) are assessed in the analysis which follows. The effects of "external" factors (e.g., sample frame, response rates) are discussed in the concluding section of this article.

Table 1. Differences in Basic Survey Samples and Procedures

	Harris 1984	SPPA '82	ARTS '83–84
Data collection agency	Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.	U.S. Bureau of the Census	Survey Research Center, University of Maryland
Sample size	1,504	17,254	1,054
Survey dates	5–15 March 1984 (using same questions asked in 1980 and 1987 surveys)	2 Jan–30 Dec 1982 (same questions used in SPPA '85 and ARTS '83–84)	1–30 June 1983 2–24 Jan 1984
Survey method	100% telephone	75% personal, 25% telephone	100% telephone
Sample frame (response rate)	Random digit dial (unknown)	Based on 1980 Census (85%–95%)	Random digit dial (68%)
Respondent selection (within sample household)	One person aged 18 + per household (of those home at the time of the call)	All residents of households aged 18 +	One person aged 18 + per household (with call-backs to designated respondents)
Prior interviews	None (first contact)	Six (over preceding three years)	None (first contact)
Data weighting	By age, sex, and race	By age, sex, and race	By age, sex, and education
Preceding questions	Amount of leisure time Access to leisure facilities Importance of museums, theaters to business and economy Should be more or less (sports or arts) events given in the area Importance of creative activities Reasons for not going to arts activities Do arts activities (see Table 3)	None (lead questions)—although earlier questions had asked about experience with crime	None (lead questions)—although earlier questions had asked about news information and news media use

CONTEXT EFFECTS

For several years, the prevailing wisdom in the survey research community has been that it makes little difference where questions were placed in a survey questionnaire or interview. More recently, several studies have indicated that preceding questions can sometimes seriously affect the responses that people give to later questions, particularly if some expectation or mindset is built into these preceding survey questions. In the case of arts-related behavior, for example, prior questions that imply that respondents ought to be participating in such behavior, that other people are participating, or that identify the purpose (or the sponsoring agency) of the study could well skew responses to the survey questions away from responses that would be obtained if no such prior questions were asked.

In the case of the Harris survey, no blatant context effects appear to be present, although that remains an empirical question. There are no introductory statements about the purpose of the survey or the sponsoring agency (Phillip Morris Company). However, as noted at the bottom of Table 1, there were several questions about the arts and leisure that preceded the arts participation questions—questions about the importance of the arts to the economy and the importance of creative activities generally to the respondent, or about whether the respondents themselves had engaged in various arts-related activities. There is the possibility, then, that these questions could create the impression that reporting more attendance at arts performances is what is expected of respondents in the survey. Respondents might want to report more arts activity, say, as a way of compensating for not being active in the arts in the prior year, or as a way of being consistent with their earlier statements of support for the arts (e.g., 83% of Harris survey respondents said it was at least somewhat important for them to have more creative activities in their community). Alternatively, one could argue that these warm-up questions served to refresh respondents' memories regarding arts participation.

In the case of SPPA, such a source of prior question bias is not possible since these were the first questions asked of respondents in this supplement to the National Crime Survey. However, the sponsoring agency of the survey was clearly identified to respondents prior to that first question: "The Census Bureau is collecting this information for the National Endowment for the Arts." This by itself could be a source of higher reporting since respondents knew to which organization to give possibly compliant or helpful responses. Whether this would encourage higher responses than the Harris lead-in questions is not clear, although results from the ARTS '83–84 study that did not mention NEA sponsorship suggest the SPPA responses were not affected by the introduction.

Table 2. Percentages in the 1984 Harris Surveys Reporting Attendance Ever and Last Year

Harris Activity	Ever Attended	Attended Last Year
Movies	NA	78
Live performance of plays, musical comedies, pantomime, other theater	67	60
Live popular music performances by popular singers, bands, rock groups	60	53
Visits to art museums that exhibit paintings, drawings, sculpture	NA	58
Live performances of opera or musical theater	35	28
Live performances of ballet, modern dance, folk or ethnic dance	34	28
Live performances of classical or symphonic music by orchestra, chamber groups, soloists	34	29

NOTE: NA = question not asked.

QUESTION TIME FRAMES

As shown in the Appendix, the Harris survey asked several of its attendance questions using a two-stage filtered approach. It first asked whether the respondent ever went to any such performances; for each "yes" response it asked how many times the respondent had attended in the previous year. The SPPA question asked directly whether the respondent had gone in the last year.

No solid survey evidence seems available to show that asking a long-range filter question will affect response to a follow-up shorter-range question. However, it would not be surprising to find that having already said that one had engaged in a (socially desirable) activity increased the likelihood of also saying one has done that activity in the shorter run. Therefore, however well-intentioned the filter is in sparing respondents the burden of describing an activity in which they do not engage, responses to the second-stage questions could well be affected by the process of being filtered from the long-run question. Respondents may then feel inconsistent if they report not having done the activity in the short run. Thus, at least 80% of Harris respondents who said they had ever done the activity said they had also done it in the last year.

As shown in Table 2, the "ever attended" Harris figures are only 5 to

7 percentage points higher than the Harris proportions reporting attendance in the last year. We shall return to this point in the conclusion.

QUESTION-WORDING DIFFERENCES

There are some significant differences in the question wording of the two surveys, particularly regarding which activities are combined in the question definition. As detailed in the Appendix, we find the following contrasts in activity definitions and combinations:

Harris 1984	SPPA '82
1. Plays and musicals, pantomime, and other theater	4. Musicals and operettas 5. Nonmusical stage plays
2. Art museums (with examples)	7. Art museums and galleries
3. Opera or musical theater	3. Opera 4. Musicals and operetta
4. Ballet, modern dance, folk/ethnic	6. Ballet Modern (ARTS '83–84) Folk/ethnic (ARTS '83–84)
5. Classical music/symphony	2. Classical music (includes choral music)

The Harris survey question *combines* plays and musicals in one question, and combines opera and musical theater (thus allowing attendance at a musical the opportunity to be counted in two separate questions). The Harris dance question also combines ballet, modern dance, and folk/ethnic dance into a single question; the three were asked separately in the ARTS '83–84 survey. The SPPA survey question, on the other hand, may produce higher estimates on musicals and classical music items because they explicitly include operetta with musical theater and include choral music with classical concerts.

One way of partially resolving these question discrepancies is to total the figures for the two separate SPPA items to make them equivalent to the Harris combined item—at least conceptually. Thus, we combine the SPPA items on plays and musicals and on opera and musical theatre. For the Harris item on ballet, modern dance, and folk/ethnic dance, we can accomplish this goal only through the separate questions in the ARTS '83–84 study that were included on modern dance and on folk/ethnic dance performances.

The result of all these combinations is shown in Table 3. It can be seen that even with these recalibrations, the Harris and SPPA surveys diverge widely and in a quite consistent direction: the Harris data indicate far higher participation. Thus 56%–60% of Harris's respondents report theater attendance in the previous year, compared to 21%–23% of SPPA respondents who reported that in the previous 12 months they had either attended a musical *or* a nonmusical play (and subtracting out the proportion who did both and would otherwise be doubly counted). In the case of museum visits, the Harris data show 55%–60%, which is almost twice as high as the 22%–28% in the SPPA surveys. For dance, the Harris figures are 20%–28% and the ARTS '83–84 figure is 13%; for classical concerts—the most directly comparable item—we find Harris at 21%–29% and SPPA at 13%.

In the closest set of figures, 20%–28% of Harris respondents reported attending opera or musical theater, compared to the equivalent combined figures for 18%–20% in SPPA. With this exception, all differences are well beyond the .001 statistical significance level. In contrast to the 2- to 5- point sampling error levels theoretically associated with such surveys, the last column of Table 3 shows discrepancies of up to 36 percentage points, 19 points on average.

These higher differences in reported participation levels in the Harris data are not confined to performance attendance data. As shown in Table 4, the Harris figures for *self*-participation in various art forms are also markedly higher. It should be noted that there are even more serious question-equivalence problems with these self-performance activities than with the attendance data. Moreover, the Harris data use a broader time frame, including activities done "at least every once in a while," which would probably be perceived by most respondents as extending beyond the one-year time frame used in the SPPA questions. (At the same time, the differences in the two columns of Table 2 suggest that the yearly and lifetime time frames should only differ by about 5 to 7 percentage points.)

In summary, it would appear that question *wording* and definition per se also do not seem to account for the large differences in reporting levels in Tables 3 and 4. The question filter may have had some effect in the higher Harris figures; this explanation will be examined more directly below. We return now to a factor that should produce more of a difference.

DATA WEIGHTING

Both the Harris and SPPA '82 were weighted to reflect population totals. The Census Bureau weights reflected the 1982 Census population counts; the population frame of reference employed by the Harris data is less clear. However, Table 5 shows the two samples do not diverge greatly on the factors for which the Harris data have been weighted, namely, age, sex, and race; no difference is greater than 3

Table 3. Harris–SPPA Difference in Attending Arts/Cultural Events in Last Year

	Harris			SPPA			Average Harris–SPPA Difference
	1980	1984	1987	'82	ARTS '83–84	'85	
Movies	75%	78%	74%	63%	NA	59%	+ 14 points
Live performances of plays, musical comedies, pantomime, other theater	56	60	56	23	22%	21	+ 35 points
Live popular music performances by popular singers, bands, rock groups	47	53	49	NA	35	NA	+ 18 points
Vists to art museums that exhibit paintings, drawings, sculpture	60	58	55	22	28	22	+ 33 points

Live performances of opera or musical theater	20	28	22	20	20	18	+ 4 points
Live performances of ballet or modern dance, folk or ethnic dance	20	28	27	NA	13	NA	+ 15 points
Live performances of classical or symphonic music by orchestra, chamber groups, soloists	21	29	26	13	13	13	+ 12 points
Visit science/natural history museums	51	46	44	23	NA	23	+ 24 points
Visit historic buildings/museums	57	55	54	37	40	36	+ 18 points
N	1,500	1,504	1,501	17,254	1,054	13,675	
Average difference							+ 19 points

NOTE: NA = question not asked.

Table 4. Harris–SPAA Differences in Self-Reported Participation in Arts-Related Activities

	Harris			SPPA			Average Harris–SPPA Difference
					ARTS		
	1980	1984	1987	'82[a]	'83–84[a]	'85[a]	
Do needlepoint, weaving, or other handwork	42	44	41	32	NA	28	+12 points
Play a musical instrument	30	31	30	NA	21	NA	+10 points
Paint, draw, or engage in graphic arts such as etching	28	29	27	10	NA	9	+18 points
Write stories or poems	22	25	24	6	NA	6	+17 points
Sing in a choir or other choral group	20	23	23	NA	10	NA	+13 points
Dance ballet or modern dance	21	21	22	NA	7	NA	+14 points
Dance folk or ethnic dances	18	17	15	NA	7	NA	+10 points
Make pottery or ceramics	18	17	14	12	NA	12	+4 points
Average difference							+14 points

HARRIS QUESTION: Let me read you some activities that some people do at least every once in a while. Please tell me whether you yourself do each of these activities at least every once in a while, or not.

SPPA QUESTIONS: See Appendix.

[a] Time frame reference: previous 12 months.

Table 5. Demographic Composition of the Sample

	Harris 1984		SPPA '82
	Number of Interviews	Weighted % of Total	Weighted % of Total
Nationwide	1,504	100%	100%
Region			
East	382	25	26
Midwest	390	26	27
South	450	30	29
West	282	19	19
Size of place			
Cities	468	32	27
Suburbs	663	44	41
Town/rural	373	24	32
Age			
18–29	442	30	28
30–49	626	32	35
50–64	270	21	21
65+	160	16	16
Education			
8th grade	49	4	12
9–11th grades	not reported		13
High school graduate	676	47	38
Some college	392	25	19
College graduate	381	23	18
Sex			
Male	718	46	47
Female	786	54	53
Race			
White	1,309	84	86
Black	124	10	10
Hispanic	71	6	4
Income			
$7,500 or less	135	13	18
$7,501–$15,000	216	18	24
$15,001–$25,000	349	19	28
$25,001–$35,000	297	16	25
$35,001–$50,000	210	14	
$50,001 and over	166	10	5

percentage points. The two samples are also relatively close on the factors of region, urbanicity, and, generally, income. The SPPA data were self-weighting by household size, since all adults were interviewed; the Harris data were apparently not weighted by household size.

However, for level of education, the factor that the SPPA '82 data clearly show makes the most difference in arts attendance, there is a serious departure. It is reported that the Harris survey interviewed only 49 respondents with less than a high school degree, which Harris reports as representing only 4% (actually 3.3%) of this sample. Yet the Census Bureau puts the percentage with only a grade school degree at 12% and another 13% with 9–11 years of education; both groups combined, then, constitute more than a quarter of the American population. With less-educated respondents being so seriously underrepresented, it should not be surprising to find the Harris arts participation figures being much higher.[1]

Nonetheless, even this substantial discrepancy still does not account for much of the differences in results. Table 6 arrays the educational level differences *within* each survey, thus directly comparing the participation rates of grade school educated, college educated, etc., across each survey. While the comparison is not exact because the Harris data are for the "ever attend" responses rather than for attending in the last year, we have seen in Table 2 that these differences between Harris ever attend vs. yearly estimates are not great (being 5 to 7 percentage points). Yet, as Table 5 shows, the Harris data estimates continue to be double, or up to 46 percentage points higher (for visiting art museums among the "some college" group) than the rates reported in SPPA '82 for equivalent educational categories.[2]

It should be noted that properly weighting the Harris results by 1982 Census Bureau education data does reduce Harris estimates in the expected downward direction; for example, after proper weighting for education, Harris's classical music attendance moves from 34% to 28% and movie attendance from 78% to 67%. Nonetheless, while the properly weighted Harris data do come closer to the SPPA '82 data, they remain significantly different even after these factors are taken into account.

The same deflation would likely be found if the Harris data could be

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[1] Data from Presser, 1981, indicate a continuing long-term tendency for Harris data to have disproportionately higher numbers of college-educated respondents compared to Census Bureau figures.

[2] That is not to say that the relationships are identical, and a log-linear analysis on the theater data in Table 6 (performed by a reviewer) shows that there is a significant three-way interaction indicating a different relation with education in the two surveys.

Table 6. Differences in Attendance by Education Levels: Harris 1984 and SPPA '82

	8th Grade	High School Graduate	Some College	College Graduate
Theater				
Harris 1984	42%	54%	77%	88%
SPPA '82	7	16	32	50
Art museums				
Harris 1984	27	46	79	78
SPPA '82	5	16	33	49
Opera, musical theater				
Harris 1984	19	22	44	55
SPPA '82	6	14	28	43
Classical concerts				
Harris 1984	9	22	42	57
SPPA '82	3	8	18	34

NOTE: Harris 1984 question asks "ever attended"; SPPA '82 asks "attended last year."

weighted for nontelephone ownership. However, after control for education, race, urbanicity, and sex, Robinson and Triplett (1987) found telephone owners in the SPPA reported only one- to two-percentage-point higher participation than nonowners for most arts activities. Thus, weighting by the above demographic factors accounts for most of the differences by telephone access.

Conclusions

We have examined several "internal" factors that may explain the far higher arts participation rate figures in Harris data than Census Bureau studies. Four of these factors that were reviewed did seem to account for some of the discrepancy:

1. The use of the "ever go" filter rather than the direct "last 12 months" time frame in the initial Harris question
2. The inclusion of multiple activities (opera and musicals; ballet and modern dance and folk/ethnic dance) in some of the Harris questions
3. The underrepresentation of respondents with less than a high school education in the Harris sample—as well as the failure

generally to weight the Harris data by the proportion of respondents in various educational categories in the population

4. The exclusion of nontelephone households from the Harris sample frame

The possibility that the Harris figures might be higher because of question context effects was also raised, although there were reasons to expect SPPA responses to be inflated for that reason also. The activity definitions in the wording of the questions did not otherwise appear to be a major consistent source of higher reporting levels, although this does remain a potential source of upward reporting.

Thus, while a good portion of the variance in results can be explained by these factors, much of it cannot be. The four factors noted above each account for higher reporting levels by up to a fifth, while the comparisons in Tables 3 and 4 are sometimes doubled. As Table 6 shows, the proportions in the Harris survey continue to be markedly higher for the *same* educational levels of respondents. Thus, some other major factor must be at work to produce the discrepant figures.

One way of identifying such a factor is through separate experimental studies using the same Harris and SPPA questions. Two such small-scale experiments were conducted by the University of Maryland Survey Research Center, one in spring 1987 and the other in fall 1987 with statewide RDD samples (response rates 70% and 74%). These omnibus Maryland Polls asked half the sample the Harris question and the other half the SPPA question. These questions were inserted roughly midway through these omnibus surveys with unrelated questions preceding them. For the most comparable item, namely, attending classical music concerts, the population estimate for participation in the previous year was about the same: 32% for the SPPA question (#2; N = 243) and 34% for the two-stage Harris question (#10c–d; N = 253). For attending art museums, the single-stage Harris question (#13a; N = 262) produced a 47% estimate, the SPPA question (#71; N = 303), 44%. Sample sizes (about 250) in each condition were rather small in relation to those in Tables 3 and 4, but the results were well within sampling error. This would seem to rule out question filter effects as a major explanation.

Thus, we are left with external factor explanations such as cooperation rates and respondent selection procedures. As noted earlier, we expect that while no response-rate data are provided in the 1984 Harris report, standards on such methodological matters tend to be more relaxed in commercial surveys. Surveys done with careful probability methods and higher response rates are more expensive to conduct, and minimization of costs is of paramount concern in most commercial surveys. Moreover, the results from telephone and personal interviews usually can be made to match population quotas well; and it may be argued that, if people who respond to these surveys seem little different from those who refuse or are hard to reach, the extra cost for higher response rates would not be justified.

In this case, however, the behavior under study appears to be much more sensitive to relaxation in respondent selection procedures. Possibly respondents who take part in these surveys are more interested in the arts than those who refuse or are hard to reach.

For now, that selectivity factor appears to be the most plausible explanation we have for these data divergences on arts and cultural participation. With their longer history and their ability to pay more careful attention to methodological detail, one might expect the Census Bureau figures to be a more trustworthy source than commercial survey data. That seems to have been the case for the 1977 National Recreation Survey, for example (Robinson, 1986). At the same time, other studies done by commercial survey firms often do produce results consistent with those from Census Bureau or careful academic surveys.

That does not mean that the Harris or other commercial data do not provide valid insights into the correlates of participation. Indeed, their relations of participation to demographic background factors (e.g., education, age) are generally similar to those from SPPA and other Census studies. It may also be the case that the Harris (1987) data can provide valid perspectives on trends in participation (e.g., both show declines in musical theater attendance across the mid 1980s).

Nonetheless, it is clear that the Harris data do provide markedly higher estimates of participation than those asked by the U.S. Census Bureau. Without validity data on the actual participation of the American public (which is all but impossible given the annual time frames involved) or data from a true controlled experiment across survey organizations, it is hard to tell definitively whether the Census Bureau data are too conservative or the commercial data are too generous. Our small-scale studies again suggest the latter conclusion, but they need replication and validation.

These results also challenge the conventional conclusion that "house effects" across survey organizations are minor and unimportant, as first reported by Stouffer (1955) and essentially replicated in Steiner (1963), Smith (1982), and Turner and Martin (1984). At a time when it is proposed that commercial firms can collect survey data more cost effectively than government agencies, the present findings have important policy implications for which types of agencies should collect behavioral and participation data.

Appendix: Arts Participation Questions Employed in the Harris and SPPA Surveys

ATTENDANCE ITEMS

Harris (1980, 1984, 1987)	SPPA '82 and '85 (+ ARTS '83–84)
7. Do you ever go to any live performances of plays, musical comedies, pantomime, or other kinds of theater or not?	5. (During the last 12 months), did you go to a live performance of a nonmusical stage play? Do not include grade school or high school productions.
8b. (If do go) Approximately how many times did you go to live theater performances in the past 12 months, not counting any performances given in connection with schools or classes?	4. During the last 12 months, did you go to live musical stage play or an operetta? Do not include grade school or high school productions.
9. Do you ever go to live popular music performances by popular singers, bands, or rock groups and the like?	ARTS '83–84. Did you go to any other performances of live music? (Asked after questions about jazz, classical, opera, and music theater)
10c. What about live performances of classical or symphony music by orchestra, chamber groups, soloists, etc.—Do you ever go to such classical music performances or not?	2. During the last 12 months, did you go to a live classical music performance? This includes music and instrumental or vocal recitals, as well as symphony and choral performances.
10d. (If do go) Approximately how many times did you go to live classical music performances in the past 12 months, not counting performances given by your children in connection with schools or classes?	
10e. What about live performances of opera or musical theater—Do you ever go to live opera or musical theater performances, or not?	3. During the last 12 months, did you go to a live opera?
10f. (If do go) Approximately how may times did you go to live performances of opera or musical theater in the past 12 months, not counting performances given by your children in connection with school or classes?	4. During the last 12 months, did you go to a live musical stage play or an operetta? Do not include grade school or high school productions.

11a.	And what about dance performances—Do you ever go to live performances of ballet or modern dance, or folk or ethnic dance, or not?	6.	During the last 12 months, did you go to a live ballet performance?
11b.	Approximately how many times did you go to live performances of ballet or modern dance, or folk or ethnic dance, in the past 12 months, not counting performances given by your children in connection with school or classes?	ARTS '83–84.	In the last 12 months, did you go to any other type of live dance performance, for example, modern dance, ethnic or folk dance, jazz dance, or tap dance?
13a.	How many times, if any, did you visit art museums that exhibit paintings, drawings, sculpture, etc., during the past 12 months?	7.	During the last 12 months, did you visit an art gallery or an art museum?
13b.	And how many times, if any, did you visit science or natural history museums during the last 12 months?	24.	During the last 12 months, did you visit a science museum, natural history museum, or the like?
13c.	And how about history museums which preserve objects from the past—including historic buildings or sites—how many times did you visit history museums in the past 12 months?	25.	During the last 12 months, did you visit a historic park or monument, or tour buildings, or neighborhoods for their historic or design value?

SELF-PARTICIPATION ITEMS

6.	Let me read you some activities that some people do at least every once in a while. Please tell me whether you yourself do each of these activities at least every once in a while, or not.		During the last 12 months
6.1.	Paint, draw, or engage in graphic arts such as etching	35.	Did you do any painting, drawing, sculpture, or printmaking activities?
6.2.	Make pottery or ceramics	29.	Did you work with pottery, ceramics, jewelry, or do any leatherwork, metalwork, or similar crafts?
6.3.	Sing in a choir or other choral group	ARTS '83–84.	Have you take singing lessons or done any singing for your own pleasure? Have you sung in a choir?

6.4.	Do needlepoint, sewing, or other handwork	30.	Did you do any weaving, crocheting, quilting, needlepoint, sewing or similar crafts?
6.5.	Write stories or poems	33.	Did you work on any creative writings such as stories, poems, plays, and the like? Exclude any writing done as part of a course requirement.
6.6.	Play a musical instrument	ARTS '83–84.	Have you taken music lessons or played musical instruments for your own pleasure?
6.7.	Dance ballet or modern dance	ARTS '83–84.	Have you taken any dance classes or done any dancing for your own pleasure—Ballet and modern dance?
6.8.	Dance folk or ethnic dance		—Folk and ethnic dance?

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THE POLLS—A REPORT
AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD ISRAELI–PALESTINIAN RELATIONS IN THE WAKE OF THE UPRISING

ALVIN RICHMAN

The Palestinian uprising which began in December 1987 has sparked the largest amount of polling on the Israeli–Palestinian dispute since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the massacres of Palestinians at the Sabra and Shatila camps in 1982. (For surveys through October 1982 see de Boer, 1983; see also Erskine, 1969.) About a dozen polls on Israeli–Palestinian relations, some of them containing a substantial number of questions, appeared in the first half of 1988. They have showed that the American public (1) is closely divided about whether the Israeli reaction to the disturbances has been "too harsh," (2) remains considerably more pro-Israel than pro-Arab or pro-Palestinian in its sympathies, (3) is inclined to approve a Palestinian homeland that does not threaten Israel's security, and (4) supports an active U.S. diplomatic role in the Middle East.

These and other findings are reviewed in three sections. The first describes the public's perceptions of the Palestinian uprising and of Israel's reaction to it. The second section discusses recent measures of pro-Israel and pro-Arab sentiment, including changes in attitudes resulting from recent events. The third examines the public's preferences on how to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and its support for an active U.S. role in that region.

Israel's Actions on the West Bank

Various polls in early 1988 showed that the percentage of Americans who supported Israel's actions on the West Bank matches the percentage who disapproved of them: about 40% thought Israel's reaction to the Palestinian uprising either was "about right" (about 30%) or "too lenient" (about 10%), compared to about 35% who believed Israel's reaction was "too harsh."

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In February 1988, Roper found 43% of the public disapproved of "recent Israeli actions"—up from 36% in 1985.[1] The high point of disapproval was 54% recorded in late 1982, after the massacre of Palestinians in Lebanese refugee camps under Israeli control.

Probably a major reason disapproval of Israel's actions on the West Bank and Gaza has not been greater is the widespread perception that the PLO has played a major role in fomenting the unrest. A Penn and Schoen poll (April–May 1988) asked, "Who do you think is most responsible for the unrest that has broken out—Israel, the Arabs on the West Bank and Gaza, or the PLO?" Thirty-eight percent named the PLO, compared to 11% who named "the Arabs on the West Bank and Gaza," and 14% who named Israel (37% had no opinion).

Another factor that probably reduced criticism of Israel's handling of the disturbances is the much more favorable image the American public has of Israel and Israeli society compared to its image of the Palestinians and the PLO. A *Los Angeles Times* poll taken in March–April 1988 found a plurality had a *favorable* "general impression" of the "Israeli people" (50% favorable, 14% unfavorable). In contrast, a plurality of 35%–27% had an *unfavorable* image of the "Palestinian people" and a majority of 52%–11% had an *unfavorable* image of the PLO.

The public's pro-Israel leaning in the Israeli–Palestinian dispute has been gauged also by polls asking respondents whether they "sympathized more" with Israel or more with the Palestinians. All such polls have shown pro-Israel sympathy was considerably greater than pro-Palestinian sympathy (about 40% pro-Israel vs. 20% pro-Palestinians on the average, with about 20% volunteering that they sympathize with "both sides" or "neither side" and 20% expressing "no opinion").

On its March–April poll, the *Los Angeles Times* asked respondents whether "in recent months" their sympathies have been more with "the government of Israel" or more with the Palestinians. Despite this focus on recent Israeli *government*–Palestinian relations, the question still produced a predominantly pro-Israel response (37% pro-Israel government vs. 25% pro-Palestinians, with 19% volunteering "both sides equally" or "neither side" and 19% "not sure").

The public's long-term, pro-Israel bent undoubtedly colors its perceptions of who is responsible for the current unrest on the West Bank and how Israel is handling it. Criticism of Israel's response to the uprising may be partially muted by the inclination of many to give

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[1] A February 1989 poll (41% disapproved) shows hardly any diminution of disapproval since early 1988.

Israel the benefit of the doubt, particularly when they believe the disturbances were created or manipulated by the PLO.

Israel's Image Before and After the Uprising

The percentage of Americans having a positive image of Israel declined to a 15-year low point after the start of the uprising. A poll taken in early 1988 by NORC (General Social Survey) found that 55% of those having an opinion rated Israel positively (plus 1 to plus 5) on its 10-point "like/dislike" scalometer scale. This was 12 percentage points below the level recorded in early 1986 (67%), and it was also less than the 60% obtained in early 1983, after the Palestinian refugee camp massacres.

Israel's 55% positive rating in early 1988 was seven percentage points below that received by Egypt (62%). In contrast to the sharp decline in Israel's positive rating between 1986 and 1988 (from 67% to 55%), Egypt received exactly the same positive rating in both years. In fact, the only country, besides Israel, to undergo a statistically significant change in positive rating in NORC's survey was "Russia," which was rated positively by 33% in 1986 and 47% in 1988.

Despite the decline in Israel's image evidenced in early 1988, all recent polls agree that pro-Israel sympathy remains sizably larger than sympathy for the Arab nations as a whole. The polls differ in measuring the level of the predominant pro-Israel sympathy and the extent to which it declined in early 1988. The most sensitive measure of long-term changes in opinion is provided by Roper polls. These show that the percentage who "sympathized more" with Israel fell from 48% in February 1987 to a low point of 30% in February 1988, when the Palestinian uprising was the leading foreign policy issue in the news. Some of this loss was retrieved by April 1988, when Roper found pro-Israel sympathy stood at 37%.

Fluctuations in sympathy for the "Arab nations" have been much smaller than changes in pro-Israel sympathy. The percentage who "sympathized more" with the "Arab nations" rose from 8% in February 1987 to 13% in February 1988, and retreated to a midpoint of 11% in April 1988, according to Roper polls.[2]

Although respondents were offered only two response categories ("more with Israel" or "more with the Arab nations"), Roper has also recorded "volunteered" neutral responses of neither side/both sides as well as the familiar "don't know" responses. The "neutral" and

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2. The latest Roper reading (February 1989) shows pro-Israel sympathy at 33% and pro-Arab sympathy at 12%.

"don't know" responses are an indicator of how much of the public (roughly one-half on the average) chooses not to side with either Israel or the Arab nations, or pays no attention to the issue. These noncommittal responses have increased when sympathy for Israel declined. Respondents who formerly were pro-Israel sympathizers are much more likely to give noncommittal responses than convert to pro-Arab sympathizers. Roper found a total of 44% gave noncommittal responses in February 1987 (30% neither side/both sides and 14% don't know). This rose to a high of 57% in February 1988, when pro-Israel sympathy was at a low point, and then fell slightly to 52% in April 1988 (37% neither side/both sides and 15% don't know).

Differences between pollsters regarding the level of pro-Israel sympathy depend largely on their attention to the variety of volunteered neutral responses expressing sympathy with "both" Israel and the Arab countries or with "neither side."

A Marttila and Kiley poll conducted in April 1988 for the American Jewish Congress obtained a "no opinion" response of 26%, but did not record any neutral responses. As a consequence, it found a much larger percentage of pro-Israel sympathy than Roper—61% vs. 37%. (There was hardly any difference in their percentages of pro-Arab response—13% vs. 11%). Moreover, Marttila/Kiley found no change in pro-Israel sympathy from an identical poll taken in October 1986 (i.e., 61% on both polls) and found a small increase in pro-Arab sympathy (from 10% to 13%). In contrast to Roper's poll, pro-Israel sympathizers critical of recent Israeli actions who might have been disposed to volunteer a neutral response in early 1988 were not given that option on the Marttila/Kiley poll; few were willing to make the larger switch from a pro-Israel to a pro-Arab position.

Other pollsters who have recorded neutral responses, but to a lesser extent than Roper, have found the percentage of pro-Israel sympathizers somewhere between those obtained by the Roper and Marttila/Kiley polls. For example, a *Los Angeles Times* poll taken in March–April 1988 recorded a neutral response of 18% (compared to 37% by Roper and 0% by Marttila/Kiley) and found the level of pro-Israel sympathy was 51%—approximately midway between the levels found by Roper (37%) and Marttila/Kiley (61%). The level of pro-Arab sympathy obtained by the *Times* poll, 12%, hardly differed from that obtained by Roper (11%) or Marttila/Kiley (13%).

Palestinian Homeland

Support for the concept of a Palestinian homeland appears to have risen slightly over preuprising levels. Several polls taken in 1988–89 have shown a plurality of about 40% approved the idea of a homeland "in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip," compared to about 25% who disapproved. A relatively large minority (about 35% on the average) have expressed no opinion on this issue.

Previous polls have shown that Americans are more sympathetic to the Palestinian claim to the West Bank as a national homeland than they are to an Israeli claim based on possession during biblical times. Most have opposed Israeli annexation or the expansion of settlements on the West Bank, believing these heighten tension in the area. A May 1988 poll taken by Penn and Schoen for the Anti-Defamation League found twice as many believed the effect of Israeli settlements on the West Bank was to "contribute to greater instability in the region" (43%), rather than to "protect [Israel's] security" (21%).

Previous polls also have shown that assuring Israel's security is the public's primary concern in evaluating proposals regarding the West Bank. The American public has been inclined to approve a proposal that satisfies Palestinian national aspirations, but only if it does not appear to threaten Israel's security. For example, a 56%–16% majority agreed that Israel "ought to . . . let the Palestinian Arabs set up an independent state on the West Bank . . . if Israel could be assured of its security from attack."

Presumably a major reason that support for a Palestinian homeland has not been higher than 40% on most polls is the widespread belief it would pose a threat to Israel's security. A *Time*/Yankelovich poll taken in January 1988 found a plurality of 45% agreed (vs. 30% who disagreed) that "Palestinians are committed to destroying the state of Israel." Penn and Schoen's poll in May 1988 found a plurality of 41% believed (vs. 26% who did not believe) that a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza would be a "threat to Israel's existence."

The public tends to favor proposals regarding the West Bank that appear to assure Israel's security and tends to oppose proposals that do not. For example, a Marttila and Kiley poll taken in April 1988 for the American Jewish Congress found about 60% *favored* (vs. about 35% who opposed) a "demilitarized" Palestinian state or one over which Israel maintained military control while granting local self-rule. However, about 60% *opposed* (vs. about 35% who favored) a proposal for a Palestinian–Jordanian confederation containing no provision regarding Israel's security or a "completely independent Palestinian state . . . with the military capacity to defend its borders."

Support for a Palestinian homeland also varies greatly depending on the perceived role of the PLO. In January 1988, Penn/Schoen found support for a Palestinian state dropped sharply—from 44% in favor (vs. 26% opposed) to 15% in favor (vs. 49% opposed)—when it was posited that "the state [would be] ruled by the PLO." On the other hand, if the PLO "agreed to recognize . . . Israel and also stopped its terrorist raids on Israel," Marttila/Kiley found that a 57%–27% majority believed Israel should then "agree to the idea of a Palestinian state" on occupied land.

U.S. DIPLOMATIC ROLE

As noted earlier, the American public has a distinctly more negative image of the PLO than of the Palestinians as a whole. Penn/Schoen (January 1988) found that among their respondents who were familiar with the PLO (72% of the total sample), two-thirds regarded the PLO as a "terrorist organization" rather than as a "national liberation movement" (66% vs. 17%). Nevertheless, most Americans approved the United States having "contact" with the PLO (55%) and "inviting" it to an international conference to help resolve the Middle East dispute (59%). However, a similar proportion (62%) believed the PLO should *not* be accorded recognition as the "official representative of the Palestinian people"—not until it recognizes Israel and disavows use of terrorism.

Surveys taken in early 1989, after the start of U.S.–PLO talks, show about two-thirds of the public (67%) approves them, even though nearly that number (61%) still regard the PLO as a terrorist organization.

Most Americans approve the U.S. call for an international Mideast peace conference, as well as the United States presenting specific proposals to try to resolve the Arab–Israeli dispute. Penn/Schoen (January 1988) found a 78%–15% majority favored the United States "convening an international peace conference" on the Middle East, including U.S., Soviet, and Palestinian representatives. Marttila/Kiley (April 1988) found a 62%–34% majority favored U.S. efforts to "help mediate between the Israelis and the Arabs, and offer specific solutions to the crisis."

Conclusion

Various polls taken since the start of the Palestinian uprising in December 1987 have repeatedly shown that Americans are closely divided about whether the widely reported use of force by Israeli troops against Palestinian demonstrators has been "too harsh" a reaction.

Disapproval of the severity of Israel's actions presumably has been mitigated by the fact that the public attributes the Palestinian disturbances more to manipulation by the PLO, regarded by many as a terrorist organization, than to Israeli policies. Thus, it is not surprising that recent polls on the public's basic sympathies in the Middle East all show pro-Israel sympathy remains considerably larger than pro-Arab or pro-Palestinian sympathy. Roper polls did reveal a dip in pro-Israel sentiment in early 1988, but this was partly recouped by the spring. Pro-Arab sentiment has fluctuated very little around the 10% level.

The public's priorities when weighing proposals regarding the West Bank are (1) assuring Israel's security, (2) satisfying Palestinian national aspirations, and (3) satisfying Israeli territorial claims based on possession during earlier times. Reflecting these priorities, the public predominantly supports proposals for a Palestinian homeland which assure Israel's security and opposes proposals which do not contain such assurance. At the same time, the public predominantly opposes expansion of Israeli settlements on the West Bank, perceiving them as more likely to increase tension with Palestinians than increase security for Israel.

Most Americans support an active U.S. diplomatic role in efforts to resolve the Arab–Israeli dispute. Most approve U.S. "talks" with the PLO, but most oppose recognizing the PLO as the "official representative" of the Palestinian people until it recognizes Israel and renounces terrorism.

We are indebted to the following organizations for their research results; all samples are national representative telephone samples of the adult population unless otherwise noted.

DMI—Decision-Making Information
Gallup—American Institute of Public Opinion, Gallup Organization
GSS—General Social Surveys, National Opinion Research Center
Harris—Louis Harris and Associates
Hart/CT—Peter Hart Research Associates/*Chicago Tribune*
LAT—*Los Angeles Times*
MG/AP—Media General/Associated Press
MK/AJC—Marttila and Kiley/American Jewish Congress
PS/ADL—Penn and Schoen/Anti-Defamation League
Roper—Roper Organization
Roper/AJC—Roper Organization/American Jewish Committee
Time/YCS—*Time*/Yankelovich, Clancy, Shulman

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Israel's Actions on the West Bank

ISRAEL'S HANDLING OF PALESTINIAN UNREST

PS/ADL: As you may know, there have recently been demonstrations by Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza against the Israeli occupation of those territories. From what you know, has Israel responded to these demonstrations too harshly, not harshly enough, or has its response been appropriate under the circumstances?

	4/29–5/1/88	*1/20–24/88*
Too harsh	32%	36%
Appropriate	26	29
Not harsh enough	11	12
Don't know	31	23
N	800	810

Roper/AJC: Turning to the situation in the West Bank and Gaza, do you think the Israeli government's response to the Palestinian uprising has been too harsh, too lenient, or about right? (Personal interviews)

	4/16–29/88
Too harsh	28%
About right	26
Too lenient	11
Don't know	35
N	1,992

Gallup: Some people feel Israel has been too harsh in dealing with Palestinian riots. Others feel Israel has used only enough force to prevent further rioting. Which comes closest to your own point of view—that Israel's handling of the riots has been too harsh, too lenient, or about right?

	2/3–4/88
Too harsh	43%
About right	32
Too lenient	17
No opinion	8
N	613

"RECENT ISRAELI ACTIONS"

Roper: How do you feel about recent Israeli actions in the Middle East? At the present time, would you say you are a strong supporter of these actions, a moderate supporter of these actions, a moderate critic of these actions, or a strong critic of these actions? (*N* = approx. 2,000 personal interviews)

	2/89	*2/88*	*8/85*	*7/83*	*10/82*
Critic (total)	41%	43%	36%	46%	54%
Strong	16	16	12	16	24
Moderate	25	27	24	30	30
Supporter (total)	29	27	31	24	25
Moderate	23	20	21	17	17
Strong	6	7	10	7	8
Don't know	30	30	33	30	21

IMAGES OF ISRAELIS, PALESTINIANS, PLO

LAT: What is your general impression of the Israeli people (the Palestinian people, the Palestinian Liberation Organization—the PLO)? As of today, is it very favorable, or somewhat favorable, or somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable—or haven't you heard enough about them yet to say? (N = 1,110)

		3/26–4/7/88	
	Israeli People	*Palestinian People*	*PLO*
Favorable (total)	50%	27%	11%
Very	15	3	2
Somewhat	35	24	9
Unfavorable (total)	14	35	52
Somewhat	12	24	23
Very	2	11	29
Haven't heard enough to say, not sure	36	38	37

"SYMPATHY" FOR ISRAEL VERSUS PALESTINIANS

Gallup: In the Middle East situation are your sympathies more with the Israelis or more with the Palestinian Arabs? (Asked of respondents who said they had been following "the recent situation in Israel" either "very closely" or "fairly closely")

MK/AJC: Thinking about the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians—today are your sympathies more with the Israelis or the Palestinians?

Hart/CT: In the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, do you sympathize more with Israel or more with the Palestinians? (Asked of registered voters who said they had heard or read news stories about the recent conflict between Israel and the Palestinians)

LAT: In recent months, do you find that your sympathies have been more with the government of Israel or more with the Palestinians?

	Gallup 5/2–8/88	*MK/AJC 4/18–24/88*	*Hart/CT 4/21–23/88*	*LAT 3/26–4/7/88*
Israel	43%	55%	42%	37%
Palestinians	20	22	27	25
Neither, both, no opinion	37	23	31	38
N	586	1,017	879	1,110

Israel's Image Before and After the Uprising

SCALOMETER RATINGS OF ISRAEL, 1974–88

GSS: Now, a question about other countries. You will notice that the boxes on this card go from the highest position of "plus 5" for a country which you *like* very much to the lowest position of "minus 5" for a country you *dislike* very much. How far up the scale or how far down the scale would you rate the following countries? Israel (*N* = approx. 1,000 personal interviews; "don't knows" excluded)

	Positive Ratings			*Negative Ratings*		
	+5	*+1 to +4*	*Total Pos.*	*−1 to −4*	*−5*	*Total Neg.*
2–4/88	11%	44%	55%	35%	10%	45%
2–4/86	12	55	67	25	8	33
2–4/85	12	56	68	27	5	32
2–4/83	10	50	60	33	7	40
2–4/82	12	53	65	29	6	35
2–4/77	13	58	71	24	5	29
2–4/75	11	56	67	27	6	33
2–4/74	14	59	73	20	7	27

SYMPATHY FOR ISRAEL VS. "ARAB NATIONS"

Roper, Roper/AJC: With regard to the situation in the Middle East, at the present time do you find yourself *more* in sympathy with Israel, or *more* in sympathy with the Arab nations? (*N* = approx. 2,000 personal interviews)

	Israel	*Arab Nations*	*Neither/ Both (vol)*	*Don't Know*
2/11–25/89 (*Roper*)	33%	12%	32%	23%
4/16–29/88 (*Roper/AJC*)	37	11	37	15
2/13–27/88 (*Roper*)	30	13	34	23
2/87 (*Roper/AJC*)	48	8	30	14
8/85 (*Roper*)	37	8	31	24
10/82 (*Roper*)	38	15	30	17
1/78 (*Roper*)	37	11	36	16
3/77 (*Roper*)	43	5	36	16
11/73 (*Roper*)	48	7	28	17

Roper/AJC: With regard to the situation in the Middle East, at the present time do you find yourself more in sympathy with Israel, or more in sympathy with the Arab nations?

PS/ADL: Thinking about the Middle East conflict, are your sympathies more with Israel, or more with the Arab nations?

LAT: In the Middle East situation, are your sympathies more with Israel or more with the Arab nations?

MK/AJC: Thinking about the Arab-Israeli conflict, are your sympathies more with Israel or the Arab nations?

	Roper/AJC 4/16–29/88[a]	*PS/ADL 4/29–5/1/88*	*LAT 3/26–4/7/88*	*MK/AJC 4/18–24/88*
Israel	37%	44%	51%	61%
Arab nations	11	13	12	13
Neither/both (vol)	37	21	18	—
Don't know	15	22	19	26
Total neither/ both/don't know	52	43	37	26
N	1,992	800	1,110	1,017

[a] Personal interviews.

Palestinian Homeland

SYMPATHY FOR A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND

Roper: As you may know, the Palestinians in the Middle East want to establish a homeland for Palestinians on territory occupied by Israel since 1967. Do you think the Palestinians are right or wrong in wanting to establish a Palestinian homeland in Israeli-occupied territory, or haven't you paid much attention to it? (Personal interviews)

	2/11–25/89	*2/13–27/88*	*10/85*	*7/83*	*10/82*
Right	23%	21%	19%	22%	24%
Right, but methods wrong (vol)	14	12	12	13	14
Total right	37	33	31	35	38
Wrong	20	20	22	20	24
Don't know	19	19	19	18	13
Haven't paid attention	24	28	28	27	25
N	1,992	1,982		circa 2,000	

LAT: Do you favor or oppose giving the Palestinians a homeland in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip?

	7/5–10/88
Favor	40%
Oppose	24
Not sure	36
N	2,277

Hart/CT: I'm going to read you some suggestions people have made for dealing with the current situation in Israel. Tell me whether you favor or oppose each one. If you have no opinion, please just say so. . . . (Asked of registered voters)
Setting up a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza

	4/21–23/88
Favor	38%
Oppose	23
No opinion, not sure	39
N	1,204

PALESTINIAN VS. ISRAELI SETTLEMENT OF WEST BANK

Harris: For each [statement about an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank] tell me if you tend to agree or disagree. . . .
The Palestinian People are now homeless and deserve their own independent state, just as much as the Jews deserved a homeland after World War II.

	7/11–8/3/80[a]
Agree	71%
Disagree	12
Not sure	17
N	1,506

[a] Personal interviews.

For each [statement about Prime Minister Begin of Israel] tell me if you tend to agree or disagree. . . .
He is right to claim that Israel has prior historical right to control the West Bank since Jews lived there in biblical times.

	7/11–8/3/80[a]
Agree	42%
Disagree	38
Not sure	20
N	1,506

[a] Personal interviews.

DMI: Now I'm going to read you a list of some of the key points of President Reagan's new Middle East Peace Plan. As I read each one, I would like for you to tell me whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with each point. (*N* = 1,020)

	10/6–11/82				
	Agree		*Disagree*		*No*
	Strg	*Smwt*	*Smwt*	*Strg*	*Opinion*
Israel should not annex the territories they currently occupy	27%	29%	19%	12%	13%
There should be an immediate freeze on new Israeli settlements on occupied Arab land	42	30	13	6	9

PS/ADL: Do you think Israeli settlements on the West Bank of the Jordan River protect the country's security, or do they contribute to greater instability in the region?

	4/29–5/1/88
Help protect	21%
Destabilize	43
Don't know	36
N	800

ISRAEL'S SECURITY

Harris: Do you feel that . . . if Israel could be assured of its security from attack, then it ought to agree to let the Palestinian Arabs set up an independent state on the West Bank . . . or don't you feel this is so? (Personal interviews)

	7/11–8/3/80
Agree	56%
Disagree	16
Not sure	28
N	1,506

Time/YCS: [Do you agree or disagree] . . . Palestinians are committed to destroying the state of Israel. (Asked of non-Jewish respondents)

	1/27–28/88
Agree	45%
Disagree	30
Not sure	25
N	594

PS/ADL: If a Palestinian state were created on the West Bank and in Gaza, would that be a threat to Israel's existence, or would it not be a threat?

	4/29–5/1/88
Would be a threat	41%
No threat	26
Don't know	33
N	800

PREFERENCES AMONG WEST BANK PROPOSALS

MK/AJC: Now I'm going to read you different proposals that have been made to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and I'd like you to tell me whether you're inclined to favor or oppose each one. ("No opinion" responses omitted; italics added)

	4/18–24/88	
	Favor	*Oppose*
Israel maintains military control over the West Bank and its borders, but grants local self-rule to the Palestinians	66%	34%
A *Palestinian state* is created on the West Bank, but it's *demilitarized*, in other words the Palestinians would not be allowed to have any armed forces	57	42
The West Bank is returned to Arab rule and governed jointly by a *Palestinian-Jordanian confederation*	36	63
A completely *independent Palestinian state* is created on the West Bank with the military capacity to defend its borders	34	66
N	1,017	

PALESTINIAN HOMELAND WITH PLO TIES

PS/ADL: Thinking about the Palestinian problem, do you think there should be a Palestinian state set up on the West Bank and in Gaza under the PLO, should there be a Palestinian state federated with Jordan, or does there not need to be a Palestinian state set up? (IF FAVOR PALESTINIAN STATE:) Would you still favor this if it meant that the state was ruled by the PLO?

	1/20–24/88	
Favor Palestinian state (total)		44%
If "ruled" by PLO	15%	
Additional support if not ruled by PLO	23	
Not sure about PLO-ruled Palestinian state	6	
Oppose Palestinian state		26
Don't know		30
N	810	

MK/AJC: If the PLO agreed to recognize the existence of Israel and also stopped its terrorist raids on Israel, do you think Israel should agree to the idea of a Palestinian state on the territory now occupied by Israel, or don't you think they should agree to such a Palestinian state?

	4/18–24/88
Israel should agree	57%
Israel should not agree	27
Not sure	16
N	1,017

ROLE OF THE PLO

PS/ADL: Is the PLO a national liberation movement or is it a terrorist organization? (Asked of those who claimed to be familiar with the PLO)

	1/20–24/88
Terrorist organization	66%
Liberation movement	17
Don't know	17
N	583

Time/YCS: Do you think the PLO is a terrorist organization?

	1/9–10/89
Yes	61%
No	16
Not sure	23
N	1,012

MK/AJC: Which of the following two opinions is closer to yours: The United States should *not* negotiate with the PLO because they are terrorists and they refuse to recognize the right of Israel to exist, *or,* In order to bring about peace in the Middle East, we should be willing to talk to all parties involved in the conflict, including the PLO.

	4/18–24/88
Negotiate with PLO	62%
Don't negotiate with PLO	35
Not sure	3
N	1,017

PS/ADL: The U.S. government today has no contact with the PLO because it is a terrorist organization which refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist. Others believe the U.S. should have contact with the PLO because it is an important part in the peace-making process. Which is closer to your view?

	1/20–24/88
Have contact with PLO	55%
Don't have contact with PLO	35
Don't know	10
N	810

Do you favor or oppose convening an international peace conference comprised of Israel, Arab nations, representatives of the Palestinians, the U.S., and the Soviet Union to try to resolve the problems in the Middle East? (IF

FAVOR CONFERENCE:) Should the PLO be invited to that conference or should they not be invited?

	1/20–24/88	
Favor conference (total)		78%
Invite PLO	59%	
Don't invite PLO	19	
Oppose conference		15
Don't know		7
N	810	

MK/AJC: Do you think the U.S. government should recognize the Palestinian Liberation Organization, also known as the PLO, as the official representative of the Palestinian people or should not recognize the PLO?

	4/18–24/88
Recognize PLO	30%
Not recognize PLO	62
Not sure	8
N	1,017

PS/ADL: Does the PLO represent the Palestinian people or does it not represent the Palestinian people? (Asked of those who claimed to be familiar with the PLO)

	1/20–24/88
Does represent	23%
Doesn't represent	61
Don't know	16
N	583

MG/AP: Do you think that only the PLO can represent the Palestinians in negotiations with Israel, or could some other group do it—for example, a delegation of Palestinians and Jordanians?

	1/4–12/89
Only the PLO	11%
Some other group could represent Palestinians	63
Don't know	26
N	1,162

MG/AP: Do you approve or disapprove of the United States holding talks with the Palestinian Liberation Organization, known as the PLO?

	1/4–12/89
Approve	67%
Disapprove	17
Don't know	16
N	1,162

U.S. DIPLOMATIC ROLE

MK/AJC: Now I'm going to mention several different ways that the U.S. could participate in the Middle East peace process. After each one please tell me whether you favor or oppose U.S. participation in that particular way. (N = 1,017)

		4/18–24/88	
	Favor	*Oppose*	*Not Sure*
Initiate an international peace conference to propose solutions to the conflict	79%	18%	3%
Help mediate between the Israelis and the Arabs, and offer specific solutions to the crisis	62	34	4